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H I S T O R Y

OF THE

Ahoskie, North Carolina

BAPTIST CHURCH

By

OSCAR CREECH

Pastor of the Church

1939

Reprinted from

Hertford County Herald

Issue of August 17, 1939

Golden Anniversary of

Town of Ahoskie, North Carolina



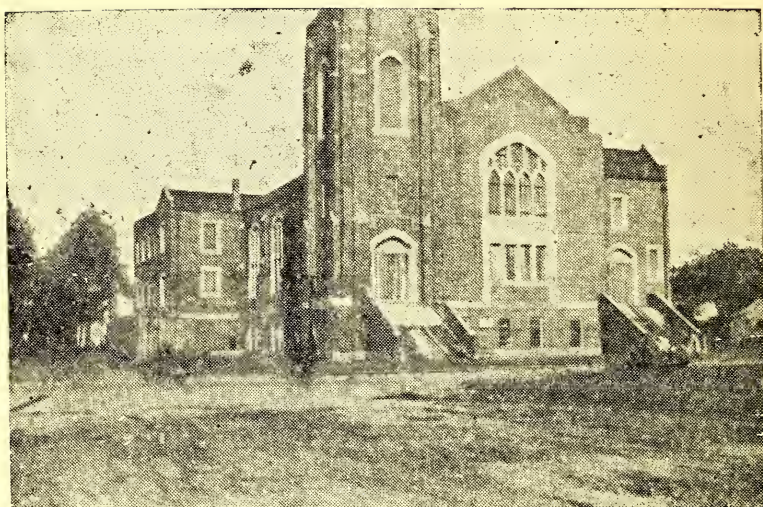
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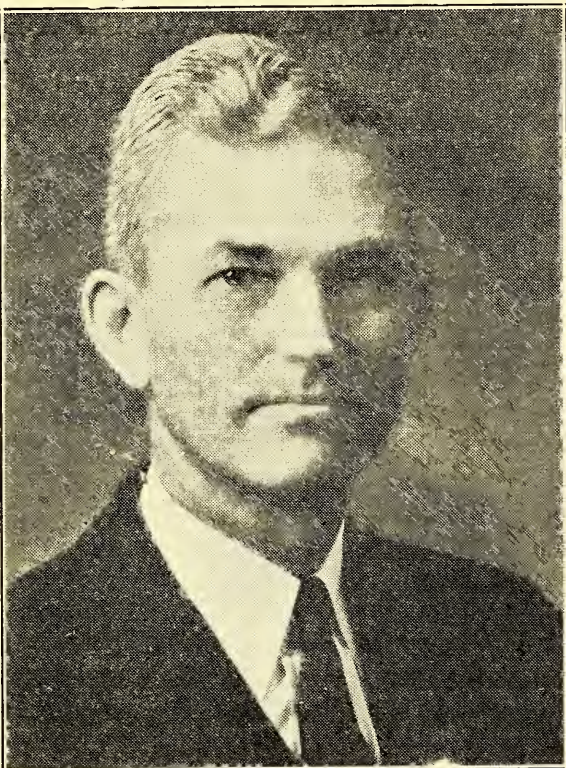
Ahoskie Baptist Church

AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF THE AHOSKIE BAPTIST CHURCH

OSCAR CREECH, son of Ransom Right and Henrietta Creech, was born in Johnston County, N. C., February 3, 1886. He attended the public schools of his native county, and was graduated at Wake Forest College (B. A.) and attended the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., for one year.

On August 21, 1907, he married Miss Mattie Louise Gulley. There are five children: Orville Ransom, Leah Jessica, Oscar, Jr., Judson Yates, and Elva Louise.

He is both teacher and preacher. His record in the profession is: Principal Castalia High School, 1908-1912; Superintendent of Nashville Graded School, 1912-1914; County Superintendent of Schools Nashville County, 1914-



1919; Superintendent Red Oak Farm Life School, 1920-23; pastorates as follows, Nashville Baptist Church 1915-19, Red Oak 1920-24, Ahoskie Baptist Church since 1925. He was ordained a minister in 1915.

Since coming to Ahoskie, Pastor Creech has the enviable record of having engaged in two major church building programs, at Ahoskie and Brantleys Grove. During his pastorates, he has initiated church

building programs that have cost a total of \$102,000, having been pastor at Nashville when its present church building was built. Approximately \$50,000 has been contributed to missions and benevolences during his pastorates.

His denominational work extends beyond the many-sided activities of the local church. For most of the last 15 years he has served as a member of the General Board of Missions of the N. C. Baptist State Convention; he has been a trustee of Chowan College for 2 years, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Meredith College since 1932; he is now Clerk of the West Chowan Baptist Association, a position held since 1934. Besides these activities, to all of which he gives enthusiastic and intelligent service, he has found time to engage in evangelistic work, holding five or six meetings each year.

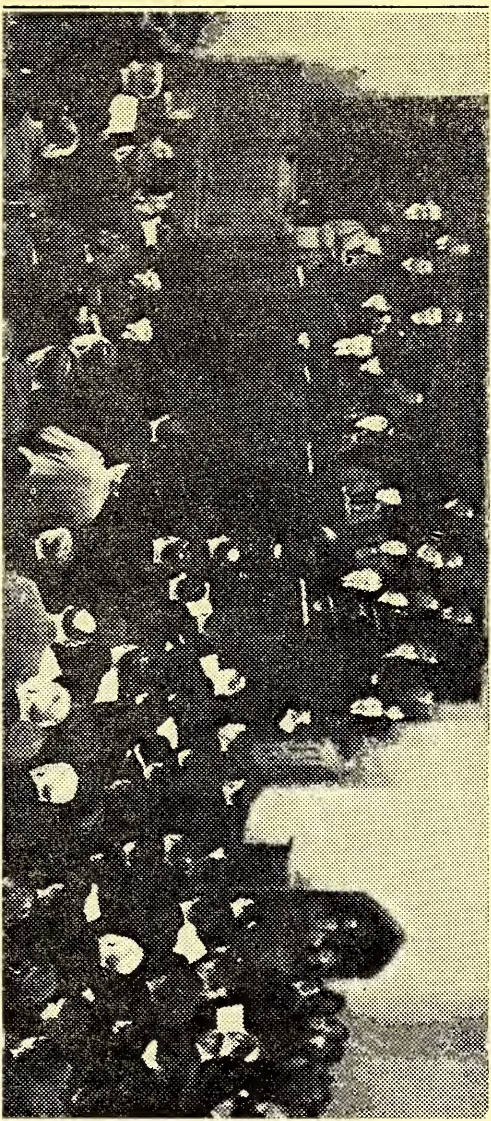
Perhaps his one greatest interest, both outside and within his church work, is, as he sets it down, "Working with young people". As Scoutmaster for 10 years he has proven his interest by the time he has devoted to the training of future Ahoskie citizens. He is a lover of sports and a sportsman himself—fisherman and huntsman.

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Fifth Sunday Song Service At Ahoskie

Shown above is a small section of the crowd that attended the fifth Sunday Bertie County Sing which was held in the Ahoskie Baptist Church, Sunday afternoon, January 30, 1938. In the background, on the pulpit dais, are the Rev. Oscar Creech, pastor of the host church; L. J. Godwin, of Ahoskie, song leader, and L. S. Mizelle, of Windsor, who presided. Behind them is the mixed choir with Miss Maidie Wade at the Hammond organ. In the foreground is part of the congregation which filled the auditorium to more than capacity.

OFFICERS AND STATISTICS

PASTORS OF AHOSKIE BAPTIST CHURCH

Hillary Morris, 1804-1825, 22 years.
(Supply Pastors), 1826-1827, 2 years.
George Williams, 1828-1835, 8 years.
John Nowell, 1836-1859, 24 years.
B. B. Williams, 1860-1863, 4 years.
Capt. J. M. C. Luke, 1864-1868, 5 years.
Dr. John Mitchell, 1869-1871, 3 years.
R. R. Savage, 1872-1885, 14 years.
Dr. John Mitchell, 1886-1887, 2 years.
H. T. Williams, 1888-1889, 2 years.
Braxton Craig, 1890-1895, 6 years.
J. K. Fant, 1896-1897, 1 1/2 years.
R. D. Cross, 1898-1900, 3 years.
L. M. Curtis, 1901-1907, 7 years.
M. A. Adams, 1908-1910, 3 years.
C. L. Dowell, 1911-1917, 7 years.
F. T. Collins, 1918-1921, 3 1/2 years.
E. J. Isenhower, 1922-1924, 2 2/3 years.
Oscar Creech, 1925-to present, 14 1/2 years.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

W. Askew, 1868-1872, 5 years.
Joseph Holloman, 1873.
George Brown and W. W. Holloman, 1874.
Joseph S. Mitchell and J. W. Holloman, 1875.
Henry Modlin and J. A. Copeland, 1876, 1877.
Richard Newsome and B. Odom, 1878, 1879.
W. H. Miller, 1880, 1901, 1903-1906, 1909, 7 years.
James P. Freeman, 1883, 1885, 2 years.
Joseph R. Bynum, 1884.
R. H. Overton, 1885-1890, 6 years.
T. J. Vann, 1891-1893, 3 years.
L. Holloman, 1894.
W. H. Jernigan, 1895-1900, 6 years.
J. S. Matthews, 1902.
A. O. Kiff, 1907, 1908, 2 years.
W. L. Curtis 1910-1916, 1918, 8 years.
C. G. Powell, 1917, 1923-1933, 14 years.
J. A. Eley, 1919-1922, 4 years.
H. O. Boulter, 1934, 1935, 2 years.
E. C. Hill, 1936 to present, 3 1/2 years.

PRESIDENTS OF WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Mrs. Mary Overton Elliott, 1899-1902, 4 years.
Mrs. Fannie Miller Harris, 1903, 1904, 2 years.
Mrs. E. Hayes, 1905, 1908-1911, 1913, 1914, 7 years.
Mrs. D. L. Myers, 1906.
Mrs. R. E. Cowan, 1907.
Mrs. T. E. Brown, 1912.
Mrs. C. G. Powell, 1915.
Mrs. A. W. Greene, 1916, 1922-1925, 1930, 6 years.
Mrs. J. C. Jenkins, 1917-1919, 3 years.
Mrs. Z. V. Bellamy, 1920, 1921, 2 years.
Miss Bessie Tayloe, 1926-1929, 4 years.
Mrs. C. C. Hoggard, 1931-1938, 8 years.
Mrs. Fred Miller, 1939, 8 months.

CHURCH CLERKS

(No clerks are reported until 1847 and after that none until 1868).
A. J. Askew, 1847.
J. S. Mitchell, 1868.
W. C. Jenkins, 1869, 1870, 2 years.
W. W. Mitchell, 1871-1875, 1877-1879, 8 years.
Thomas M. Parker, 1876.
George A. Brown, 1880-1884, 5 years.
T. J. Vann, 1885-1887, 1891, 1894, 1895, 1897, 1899-1902, 11 years.
Solon Jernigan, 1888-1890, 1892, 4 years.
J. C. Jenkins, 1893.
B. E. Copeland, 1896, 1898, 2 years.
Robert Holloman, 1903-1910, 8 years.
T. E. Brown, 1911, 1912, 2 years.
C. C. Hoggard, 1913, 1914, 2 years.
F. G. Tayloe, 1915-1924, 1927-1929, 13 years.
O. W. Hale, 1925, 1926, 2 years.
D. P. Boyette, 1930-1937, 8 years.
L. K. Powell, 1938 to present, 1 1/2 years.

CHURCH OFFICERS, AUGUST 1, 1939

Pastor—Oscar Creech.
Clerk—Lowell K. Powell.
Treasurer—J. E. Corbett.
Secretary—Mrs. S. F. Bowers.
Organist—Miss Madie Wade and Mrs. Maurice Mitchell.
Choir Directors—Mrs. Florence Beasley and Mrs. J. S. Leary.
Choir Leader—Mrs. Lloyd Godwin.
Flower Committee—Mrs. Claude Greene, Mrs. J. Bailey Barnes,

Mrs. A. M. Browne, Mrs. E. C. Hill.

Deacons—For three years: J. E. Corbett, Troy Newsome, H. P. Gatling, Mrs. C. C. Hoggard. For two years: H. U. Griffith, T. M. Forbes, W. C. Pritchard, Mrs. T. E. Beasley. For one year: E. C. Hill, R. A. Holloman, Mrs. May Greene, Mrs. W. T. Forbes.

Trustees—D. L. Myers, P. D. Parker, P. M. Joyner.

Ushers—Senior: Maylon Baker, chairman, Lee Copeland, Bennie Forbes, A. J. Eley, Arthur Greene, Robert Sumner, Stanley Vinson, Joe Copeland, Thomas Parker, Raleigh White, Troy Jernigan, Mayon Parker, John Whedbee. Junior: Maylon Baker, chairman, L. T. Liverman, Jr., Stewart Curtis, Junior Shelton, James R. Mitchell, Maylon Baker, Jr., Don Campen, Bill Modlin, Norman Earl Godwin.

Welcoming Committee—Miss Mina Holloman and Mrs. Z. V. Bellamy.

Training Union Officers

General Director—Walton Harrell.

Associate Director—Mrs. George Burgess.

General Secretary—Miss Frances Overton.

General Pianist—Mrs. C. G. Lowe.

Intermediate Leaders—Mrs. C. G. Lowe and Mrs. J. S. Alexander.

Junior Leader—Mrs. George Burgess.

SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFICERS, AUGUST 1, 1939

General Officers

Pastor—Oscar Creech.

Superintendent—E. C. Hill.

Secretary—Miss Joyce Hines.

Associate Secretary—J. E. Mitchell.

Superintendent of Literature and Treasurer—D. L. Myers.

Adult Department

Superintendent—J. H. Copeland.

Secretary—J. E. Mitchell.

Pianist—Mrs. Lee Copeland.

Teachers:

Business Men's Bible Class—Dr. C. G. Powell.

Men's Bible Class—J. E. Corbett.

Philathea Class—Miss Mina Holloman.

Phoebean Class—Mrs. C. C. Hoggard; associate—Mrs. R. L. Callis.

Ladies Bible Class—Mrs. T. E. Beasley.

Ladies, (25-35)—Mrs. Bennie Forbes.

Men, (25-35)—H. S. Hassen.

Men, (35-45)—Hugh Lee.

Young People's Department

Superintendent—Mrs. J. B. Ruffin.

Associate Superintendent—Miss Vivian Powell.

Secretary—Sidney Bowers.

Pianist—Mrs. Jessica Creech Davis.

Teachers:

Young Ladies (17-20)—Mrs. Troy Hill.

Young Men (17-20)—Thomas Parker.

Ladies (21-24)—Mrs. Hallie Baker.

Men (21-24)—Lowell K. Powell.

Young Married Ladies (17-24)—Mrs. Z. V. Bellamy.

Intermediate Department

Superintendent—Craig B. Vaughan.

Associate Superintendent—D. P. Boyette.

Secretary—Miss Adele Ausley.

Pianist—Mrs. Vernon Vaughan.

Teachers:

13 Year Boys—Chester Hill.

14 Year Boys—W. C. Pritchard.

15 Year Boys—Hugh Harrell.

16 Year Boys—D. P. Boyette.

13 Year Girls—Mrs. W. T. Forbes.

14 Year Girls—Mrs. Oscar Britton.

15 Year Girls—Mrs. May Greene.

16 Year Girls—Miss Bessie Harrell.

Associate Teachers—Mrs. Alvin Eley, Mrs. Clarence Perry,
Mrs. Norman Godwin.

Junior Department

Superintendent—Mrs. J. W. Johnson.

Associate Superintendent—F. D. Overton.

Secretary—Miss Frances Overton.

Pianist—Rachel Newbern.

Teachers:

9 Year Boys—Mrs. S. F. Bowers.

9 Year Boys—Vernon Vaughan.

10 Year Boys—Lee Copeland.

11 Year Boys—Floyd D. Overton.

12 Year Boys—Lloyd Godwin.

9 Year Girls—Mrs. Wallace Gray.

10 Year Girls—Mrs. Hilton Modlin.

11 Year Girls—Mrs. C. N. Ricks.

12 Year Girls—Miss Annie Laurie Sessoms.

Associate Teachers—Mrs. Alex Askew, Mrs. John Whedbee.

Primary Department

Superintendent—Mrs. Oscar Creech.

Associate Superintendent—Mrs. Will Myers.

Secretary—Mrs. Obed Mitchell.

Associate Secretary—Miss Edith Slaughter.

Pianist—Mrs. Herbert Copeland.

Teachers:

6 Year Boys—Mrs. G. J. Newbern.

7 Year Boys—Mrs. George Burgess.

8 Year Boys—Mrs. Tom Tunstall.

6 Year Girls—Mrs. John Tayloe and Mrs. R. G. Harrell.

7 Year Girls—Mrs. W. J. Myers.

8 Year Girls—Mrs. Herbert Copeland.

Beginners Department

Superintendent—Mrs. D. L. Myers.

Associate Superintendent—Miss Florence Beasley.

Secretary—Miss Bernice Slaughter.

Pianist—Mrs. Stanley Vinson.

Helpers:

Group 1—Mrs. Fred Miller.

Group 2—Miss Florence Beasley.

Group 3—Mrs. D. G. Waters.

Group 4—Mrs. Jordan Powell.

Group 5—Mrs. J. C. Sessoms.

Associate Helper—Miss Dolly Early.

Cradle Roll Department

Superintendent—Mrs. C. G. Lowe.

Secretary—Mrs. Rufus Mitchell.

Teacher—Mrs. L. S. Savage.

Helper—Mrs. Fox Clendenon.

Helper—Mrs. Rupert Bryan.

Extension Department

Superintendent—Mrs. E. W. Britton.

Visitors—Mrs. H. P. Gatling, Mrs. J. E. Mitchell, Mrs. J. S. Deans,
Mrs. Arthur Willoughby.

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY OFFICERS, AUGUST 1, 1939

President—Mrs. Fred Miller.

Vice President—Mrs. Hallie Baker.

Secretary-Treasurer—Mrs. W. B. Forbes.

Associate Secretary-Treasurer—Mrs. J. A. Williams.

Expense Treasurer—Mrs. Sallie Gatling.

Y. W. A. Counselor—Mrs. J. C. Sessoms.

Intermediate G. A. Leader—Mrs. C. B. Vaughan.

Jr. G. A. Leader—Mrs. Norman Godwin.

R. A. Leader—Mrs. Oscar Creech.

Sunbeam Leader—Miss Florence Beasley.

Leaders of Circles:

No. 1—Mrs. J. J. Hyatt.

No. 2—Mrs. Lena Poe.

No. 3—Mrs. J. A. Williams.

No. 4—Mrs. R. G. Harrell.

No. 5—Mrs. T. E. Beasley.

No. 6—Mrs. Lee Copeland.

No. 7—Mrs. Arthur Greene.

REPORTS OF AHOSKIE BAPTIST CHURCH BY DECADES

	Church Membership	S. S. Enrollment	W. M. S. Enrollment	B. T. U. Enrollment	Local Gifts	Missions and Benevolences Gifts	S. S. Gifts	W. M. S. Gifts
1805	65				.10			
1815	56				1.00			
1825	48				1.50			
1835	192				2.50			
1845	322	90			2.50			
1855	410				No R'p't			
1865	433				10.00			
1875	363	140			No R'p't			
1885	303	120			295.85			
1895	334	58			580.00			
1905	315	108	33		479.29	322.58	66.00	322.58
1915	478	373	134	46	928.29	1,002.58	415.29	310.41
1925	603	574	252	69	3,783.77	4,882.04	738.79	2,034.90
1935	791	559	243	82	11,513.63	2,393.39	970.22	3,755.68

HISTORY OF AHOSKIE BAPTIST CHURCH

CHAPTER I

By OSCAR CREECH

THE Ahoskie Baptist Meeting House, now located in the town of Ahoskie, North Carolina, was well located geographically. It was put in the fork between Catherine Creek and St. Johns roads. Catherine Creek road ran north to Barfield's Fishery on Chowan River and St. Johns road ran west, up what was known as the Ahoskie ridge. One mile west of the church the St. Johns road intersected the Winton-Aulander road, thus giving four roads leading to the church house from the north around by west to southwest. Catherine Creek road extended by the church south into Bertie County. One-third mile south from the meeting house on Catherine Creek road another road forked and led to Colerain by what is now Powellsville. One mile from the Colerain fork another road forked leading eastward to Harrellsville and on to Colerain. This gave all together seven roads leading to the Ahoskie Meeting House.

The wisdom in the selection of the location for the Ahoskie meeting house is seen not only by the seven roads leading to it but by the relation of the location to the other five meeting houses in this section. Meherrin was 20 miles northwest; Sandy Run (Roxobel) 17 miles southwest, Connaritsa 12 miles a bit west of south; Cashie (Windsor) 25 miles, a little east of south; Colerain 16 miles southeast, and then Chowan River 12 miles north. This location was about the center of this great agricultural area. C. W. Mitchell, historian of the West Chowan Association in 1899, said: "The church (Ahoskie) was located on the north side of the Ahoskie Swamp from which the name is derived (being Indian origin) midway between the Roanoke and Chowan rivers, in the midst of the most fertile section of eastern North Carolina."

THE BACKGROUND

"The Happy Revival Which Took Place in the Churches of the Kehukee Association in 1802 and 1803."

"After a long and tedious night of spiritual darkness and coldness in religion, blessed be God, the sable curtains are withdrawn, the day has dawned, and the sun of righteousness has risen with healing on his wings. The churches appeared to be on a general decline. Many of the old members were removed from the church militant to the church triumphant. Some had moved to the western countries, and some had gone out from us, 'that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us.' These things reduced the numbers in the churches greatly. So in some churches there were hardly members enough to hold conference, and in some other churches the Lord's supper was seldom administered. *Iniquity abounded and the love of many waxed cold.* The Association nevertheless met annually, and in every church there were a few names still left, who seemed anxiously concerned for a revival.

"Thus the work progressed slowly, but there always appeared some worthy characters in every church sensible of the coldness of religion, and at almost every Association would be devising some ways and means to bring on a revival. As early as the year 1778 a revival was greatly desired, and a fast was proclaimed, to humble ourselves before the Lord and to solicit the throne of grace for a revival. In 1785 another fast was proclaimed. The same year, at an Association at Kehukee, it was agreed to set apart some time between sunset and dark every day, for all the churches to unite together in prayer, and earnestly pray for a revival. And in 1794, the association agreed to appoint the Saturday before the fourth Sunday in every month, a day for prayer-meetings throughout the churches; whereon all the members of the respective churches were requested to meet at their meeting-houses or places of worship, and there for each of them as far as time would permit, to make earnest prayer and supplication to Almighty God

for a revival that there was no doubt but the Lord would grant the desires of the righteous. So when the set time to favor Zion was come, He heard the prayers of the Kehukee Association," (*History of the Kehukee Association, Burkett and Read, 1803*).

This statement described the spiritual condition of the churches throughout the Kehukee Association, which extended from the Virginia line on the north, to Wayne and Beaufort counties on the south, and from the Atlantic on the east to Warren and Franklin on the west. The Bertie church (now Sandy Run at Roxobel) was no exception. Lemuel Burkett was the pastor of Bertie and both he and the church were discouraged over the sad state of things. But this situation was not to remain so dark. Already revivals were breaking loose in some sections of the country. New England was in the midst of a great revival. Many churches in Tennessee and Kentucky were experiencing gracious visitations.

"When Burkett heard, perhaps from Rev. David Barrow, the good news of the revival in Kentucky he set out on the long journey to that state to learn if the reports were true. Though he was already past fifty years of age, yet he was of wiry and tough frame. Probably for the first time in his life leaving the plains of the Atlantic slope he climbed the majestic mountains which lay in his way to Kentucky. When he arrived the Revival was going on with unabated progress. Seeing the wonderful works of grace, his soul caught the seraphic flame. He preached almost night and day for several weeks in those states with great acceptance, then returned home fired with an ardent zeal surpassing anything his friends had before seen. Returning for the meeting of the Kehukee Association at Great Swamp (in Pitt County, eight or nine miles from Greenville) in 1801, Burkett proclaimed that in eight months six thousand had been converted and baptised in Kentucky, and the work was still going on. The people heard this news with much emotion, and many began to cry out for mercy and many others fell to praising and glorifying

God. Such a Kehukee Association had never before been seen. The ministers all seemed alive in the work of the Lord, and every christian present in rapturous desire was ready to cry, 'Thy Kingdom come.' The ministers and delegates carried the sacred flame home to their churches and the fire began to kindle," (*Paschal's History of N. C. Baptists*, 1930).

Burkett returned to his own church, Sandy Run (Roxobel) from the meeting of the Association after an absence of nearly four months. "When he returned his soul seemed full of love, and his religious exercises greatly revived at seeing the great revival in Kentucky. His church seemed very glad to see him return, and soon after a gracious revival took place again in this church.

"The congregation increased. Evening meetings were again appointed, and more attended them than used to attend Sunday meetings before. The word preached was usually attended with a blessing. The hearts of the people seemed open. A fast was proclaimed by the church and the Lord heard the prayers of his church. And commonly when a revival takes place in a church, the people of God are made greatly to desire it previous to its commencement. The youth appeared to be the first imprest with a religious concern. Seldom a meeting after the revival took place but what some offered for membership—four, five, six, and as many as eleven have been baptised at a time. In about two years as many as about 150 have been baptized. Many traveling ministers visited us in this time of revival, and their labors seemed blessed. As this church was the first that experienced a revival in this part of the Association, so the work spread through the adjacent churches." (*Burkett and Read's History of The Kehukee Association*, 1803).

"It (The Revival) reached the church at Meherrin in the summer of 1802. In less than two years about 160 were baptized. It is especially mentioned, as a remarkable circumstance, that our pastor baptized as many as twenty-three in one day, and in the words of the ancient chronicle, 'Some very

respectable characters in and about Murfreesboro were added to this church.' The influence of this work was felt for some years after its more powerful effects had subsided. In August, 1803, there was a prodigious excitement among the people.

"It occurred at a session of the Bertie Union Meeting, held with this church. It was supposed that there were four thousand people present. The weather proved very rainy on Sunday. There was a stage erected in the grove, and at 11 a. m. Rev. Lemuel Burkett ascended to preach. It was expected from the appearance of the clouds, that it would rain every moment, and before he had done preaching it did so. Notwithstanding this, the numerous congregation still kept together, some crying, some begging the ministers to pray for them, and some convulsed to the ground, and the greater part composedly stood and received the falling shower. Rev Burkett's text on this occasion was: 'Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over,' Ezekiel 47:5. While he was engaged in preaching in the grove, Rev. Robert Murrell was holding forth in the meeting-house, and a scene similarly exciting was being enacted. After concluding his services in the grove, Rev. Burkett proceeded to the church (Mr. Murrell still preaching) and exclaimed, as he passed through the dense throng, now intensely excited, 'The Lord is here too'." (*Duncan's History of Meherrin*, 1929).

Thus from Kentucky the revival had come to the meeting of the Kehukee Association in Pitt County in 1801, from there to Sandy Run and on to Meherrin in 1802 and 1803. Prior to this time a preaching station or mission from Meherrin had been established at Ahoskie. Miss Nancy Cherry Jenkins had given a lot on which a little house 20x20 had been built for public worship. During the revival at Meherrin probably several more members in the Ahoskie area joined Meherrin, and upon petition to the mother church a separate church at Ahoskie was organized in 1804; just fifteen

years after the adoption of the constitution of the United States.

1804—1859 — FROM BEGINNING TO A LARGE
CHURCH

Hillary Morris, 1804-Aug. 1825

George Williams, 1828-Mar. 1836

John Nowell, 1836-Feb. 1859

It is quite evident that there were more than 50 charter members. Among the members may be mentioned: Rev. Hillary Morris, the pastor, Jesse Barnes, Wiley and Jesse Brown, John S. Godwin, Hardee Hill; George, Josiah, John and Bryant Holloman—four brothers; Thomas Holloman, Josiah Mitchell, Ryan Miller, Leslie Parker, Jimmie Riddick, John Saunders, John Sears, Tom Sewell and William Slaughter. These men with their wives and children about constituted the church at the organization.

Hillary Morris, 1804—1825

Hillary Morris was licensed as a traveling evangelist by Meherrin, being a member of that body, in the early part of 1804. His postoffice was Murfreesboro, but from the organization of the church on he was reported as a member of Ahoskie. So it is evident that he moved his membership with the others for the organization and the church called him as pastor. Meherrin then ordained him for the ministry.

Thus the little church of 67 members was launched. It was represented by Hillary Morris and Nathan Saunders the next year at the meeting of the Kehukee Association and was received as a member of that body on Friday before the first Sunday in October, 1805, at Daniels Meeting House on Fishing Creek in Halifax county. At this session it was decided to divide the Association, and all churches north of Roanoke River should be Chowan Association. The next year, 1806, the Chowan Association was organized at Salem Meeting House in Pasquotank county. Rev. Hillary Morris and John P. Saunders represented the church and reported 65 members. Ahoskie was one of the 18 churches that organized the Chowan Association. The pastor, Hillary Morris, attended



FIRST AHOSKIE BAPTIST CHURCH

It is now an outmoded barn on the Johnnie J. Mitchell plantation near Ahoskie. He added the shelters—and that is Rev. Oscar Creech standing in front.

21 sessions of that body without missing a year—every session that met during his pastorate.

The delegates from Ahoskie, Elder Hillary Morris and Nathan Saunders, were a part of this first session of the Chowan which addressed a letter to the President of the United States. Because of its historical value the letter is given here and the President's reply expressing thanks to the 18 churches:

To the President of the United States:

Sir:—Under Divine protection, the Ministers and Messengers of the several Baptist churches of the North Carolina Chowan Association, held at Salem, on Newbiggin Creek, in Pasquotank county, in the District of Edenton, and State of North Carolina, having met by appointment to offer up the sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart to the great Author of their Being, for the unbounded display of goodness and of tender mercies bestowed upon the children of men; and while rendering adoration, prayer and thanksgiving, with deep humility for the great and unspeakable gift which brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, they feel a profound sense of the bounty received by the hands of the SUPREME towards the several churches in our connection by the overpowering of the Spirit upon them; not only in effecting a great increase in numbers, but in the substantial interest of the churches, being supported and strengthened by a very great and uncommon measure of Christian love, union and harmony among the Brethren. While we have great cause of thankfulness for all these bounties and mercies, we have felt the deepest gratitude to be due for the civil and religious liberties we enjoy under the administration of the government over which you, Sir, at present preside: for which liberties our fathers have, in times past, suffered at the stake and have bled and died.

The sense of contrast between the present moment and a late period when we were feelingly alarmed at the threatened invasion upon the general toleration of a free conscience in the worship of the God of our Fathers; we have now great reason to shout with loud acclamations of joy and praise that we now live under our own vine and under our own fig-tree in peace. And while we pray that the sons of liberty may be long held at the helm of government, to rule and govern these United States, we feel the strongest emotions to be thankful that under your patronage and administration, *there is none shall make us afraid.*

Living under a government of our own choice where the rights of men feel an equal and impartial distribution, how much ought we to rejoice at the envied happiness and freedom of our fellow-citizens throughout these States unrivalled and unequalled by any nation on this terrestrial globe, and in the midst of national wealth, prosperity and peace, added to extent of empire under the wise policy of your administration, we feel no danger of your violating your trust or attempting to endanger the happiness of the people who have chosen you as their Chief and Head. And while

our prayers and praises are due to the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, who has made you an instrument in his hands to give such blessings to such a people, we pray that the God of Battles may be your sun and shield; that he may give you grace and glory; and that he may *withhold no good thing from you*. And may we devoutly be permitted to add our prayers to the great Disposer of events, if it is His Will, that that life devoted to public good from the commencement of our glorious Revolution to the present day, may be prolonged with blessings to yourself and common country.

Signed by order of the Association.

GEO. OUTLAW, *Moderator*.

LEMUEL BURKETT, *Clerk*.

May 20th, 1806.

The original answer to the aforesaid address failing to come to hand, the President was pleased to send forward a duplicate of the answer, in a letter to the Moderator, of which the following is a copy:

WASHINGTON, June 24, 1806.

Sir:—I have duly received the Address signed by yourself on behalf of the Ministers and Messengers of the several Baptist churches of the North Carolina Chowan Association held at Salem, and I proffer my thanks for the favorable sentiments which it expresses towards myself personally.

The happiness which our country enjoys in the pursuits of peace and industry ought to endear that cause to all its citizens, and to kindle their hearts with gratitude to the Being under whose providence these blessings are held. We owe to Him especial thanks for the right we enjoy to worship Him, every one in his own way, and that we have been singled out, to prove by experience, the innocence of freedom in religious opinions and exercises, the power of reason to maintain itself against error, and the comfort of living under the laws which assure us that in these things, "There is none who shall make us afraid."

I am peculiarly gratified by the confidence you express that no attempt will ever be made by me to violate the trust reposed in me by my fellow-citizens or to endanger their happiness. In this confidence you shall never be disappointed. My heart never felt a wish unfriendly to the general good of my fellow-citizens.

Be so kind as to present my thanks to the churches of your Association, and to assure them of my prayers for the continuance of every blessing to them now and hereafter; and accept yourself my salutations and assurances of great respect and consideration.

Th. JEFFERSON.

Mr. George Outlaw.

Soon after the church was organized the little building was found to be too small for the congregation. It was torn down and rebuilt as a barn on a farm now owned by Mrs.

Bettie Mitchell about three miles south of Ahoskie. This barn building is still standing. The second building was erected by George Holloman and his brothers, Josiah, John and Bryant.

The first 21 or 22 years of the church's life, the pastorate of Hillary Morris, were trying years. In nine of these years there were no baptisms; only 37 baptisms were reported for this whole period and 16 of those were in 1825. In 1805 the church reported 67 members but the number was reduced year after year until in 1825 the number was only 33. The church by this time was one of the smallest in the Association. Then in 1825, 16 were baptised and the number of members went up to 48, never to be so small again.

The first gift by the church for foreign missions was in 1819. At the meeting of the Association at Sawyers Creek in 1818, Luther Rice was present and addressed the body on foreign missions. The Association then voted to ask each church to give \$1.00 annually for this cause. The pastor was the only delegate from Ahoskie that year. The minutes show that the next year, 1819, the church gave the \$1.00, but did not give any more for several years!

Hillary Morris died in August 1825. He was evidently faithful in his work as was shown by his attendance at the Associations, but was never on the program for any duty at these meetings. The men named as delegates to the Association during this first pastorate were: Nathan and John P. Saunders, Daniel Wynn, George, Samuel and James Holloman, John Sears, James Harrell, Malichi Morris, Segar Mitchell and Lewis Brown.

All gifts reported to the Association up through 1813 were in shillings and pence. The minute fund was the only item of expenses and the church usually gave 10 S. per year.

George Williams — 1828 - 1836

The year 1825 marked a turning point in the church's history. Sixteen were baptized that year and ten the next year and six the next, during which time the church was without a

regular pastor. Rev. George Williams was called to the church in 1828 and served as pastor for 8 years. His ministry was attended by steady progress. The number baptized during his pastorate of 8 years was 171. The digest of church letters given at the Association which met at Piney Grove in Gates County in 1830 says of Ahoskie: "This church continues to enjoy the labors of Brother George Williams. There have been a few added (4) by baptism and the church enjoys peace and harmony, but the prospect of a revival is not flattering." The next year none were baptized, but the following year, 1832, the heavens seemed to open upon Ahoskie and 68 were baptized. The membership of the church jumped from 72 in '31 to 142 in '32. The following year 48 more were baptized. When George Williams became pastor the membership was 72 and when he left it in 1836 the membership was 182.

Segar Mitchell was reported a licentiate of the church in 1830 and in 1834 Robert Cobb was so reported. Nothing more is found of Cobb as a preacher. He was reported again as a delegate in 1838. In 1837 at the meeting of the Association at Colerain a committee was appointed to inquire into the propriety of ordaining Segar Mitchell. The following brethren composed the committee: E. E. Wilson of Salem Church, M. Thompson of Bethlehem, Q. H. Trotman of Sandy Cross, J. Peele of Potecasi, A. M. Craig of Sandy Run and T. Jordan of Salem. "The Committee reported: That we deem it inexpedient to ordain the candidate at this time and think it would be better for the brother to visit until the next Association and we further recommend the following resolution: Resolved, That the brother be requested to travel through the bounds of the Association that the brethren may be better acquainted with his views of the Scripture. Edward E. Wilson, Chairman."

No reference was made to this at any future association so it is not known whether he was ever ordained.

The Chowan Association met with Ahoskie for the first

time in 1833. The delegates representing Ahoskie were the pastor, George Williams, R. A. Bass and R. B. Cobb, the licentiate. The association met Friday, May 17. The introductory sermon was preached by Rev. G. M. Thompson on Isa. 42:11. On Sunday the 19th, Thomas Meredith, I. M. Allen, General agent of the American Tract Society, and Brice preached.

The first church to spring out of Ahoskie as the mother church was Bethlehem in 1835.

Rev. George Williams wrote the report on periodicals for the Association at Bethel in 1836, the last year he was pastor at Ahoskie. The report is given here in full.

REPORT ON PERIODICALS—1836

"The committee to whom the subject of Periodicals was submitted beg leave to report: That we find that too many of our beloved brethren are yet ignorant of the operations of our denomination; and we believe that the spirit of opposition and unkind feeling, manifested by some arises more from ignorance than any other cause. We would therefore recommend to our beloved brethren the Biblical Recorder, and we think if that good paper were more generally patronized and read, many of the difficulties now existing among us would be entirely done away. All of which is respectfully submitted, Etc.

GEORGE WILLIAMS, Chairman."

Rev. George Williams resigned at Ahoskie in March 1836 to go west. He built well upon the foundation laid by the first pastor and laid a good foundation for the next pastor. The delegates to the Association named during this pastorate were: George, James and Simeon Holloman, James Newsome, Segar Mitchell, James Rawles, William Slaughter, P. A. Bass, R. B. Cobb, James S. Grimes and James Pruden.

John Nowell — 1836 - 1859

The next twenty-four years marked one of the greatest periods of growth in the history of the church. This was the pastorate of Rev. John Nowell of Colerain. He was called to the church in the latter part of 1836 and remained with it until his death in 1859—twenty-four years. The minutes of the Association are missing for 1854 so our figures will include nothing for that year. He baptized during his pastorate 526 persons. Several years the numbers ran as follows: 59, 31, 22,

71, 54, 34, 53, 31, 49, 25, and 27 his last year. The church letter reported 175 members of the church in the first year of his pastorate, and the last year 397 were reported. The first colored members were reported in 1842 when 32 were given. The number of colored members increased until 1852 when 114 were reported. In 1855 almost half the colored members had left the church for some cause. The membership of the Ahoskie church as reported in 1859 was, white 363 and colored 34, a total of 397.

In 1844, the first Sunday School was reported with 90 scholars and 13 teachers. It is evident that they wanted a very few scholars to a teacher. That year nine Sunday schools were reported in the Chowan Association of 42 churches and five of them were in Hertford County—Ahoskie, Bethlehem, Buckhorn, Meherrin and Mt. Tabor. The first church clerk reported was James Holloman in 1842, postoffice, St. Johns.

In 1844, Dr. A. Jack Askew was clerk, postoffice, Pitch-landing. In the church letter he gave the following note:

“Church has not been blessed in its special effort, (only five baptized) as in former years, in consequence of a very great sickness prevalent among the members; but they are not discouraged and are resolved never to forsake the blood-stained banner of the cross which is nailed to the mast.”

Notes by Dr. Askew given in Church letter in 1847 when the Association met at Mt. Tabor: “(We) have enjoyed a glorious revival during the last year.” (34 were baptized.)

“During the last year (1846—Ahoskie) erected a commodious and comfortable house greatly to their credit.” This was the third meeting house built here.

To show some of the customs and abuses of special church meetings in those days and for the encouragement of church people today a paragraph is given here in connection with this meeting of the Association at Mt. Tabor in 1847. This was written by Samuel Saunders, historian for the Association in 1894.

“At the session in 1847 stands were erected all about the

grounds, from which confectioneries and whiskey were sold. In 1853 the Old Chowan Association met with the Meherrin church, convening as had been its custom on Friday. But there was at this meeting so much selling and drinking of whiskey and horse racing in a field near the church, carried on, not only on the other days of the meeting, but also on Sunday, that the Association, to avoid this desecration of the Lord's day in connection with their sessions, decided at their meeting to convene afterwards on Tuesday, instead of Friday, so that all delegates and visitors to the Association could leave their homes after Sunday and return to them before the following Sunday, surely, then, in some respects we have made progress."

The first gift by Ahoskie for Home Missions was in 1853. The amount was \$15.00 which was next to the largest gift made.

Jesse Barnes owned the farm and lived where W. A. Baker now lives on the Aulander highway. He made his will, dated the 30th of May, 1863, which is recorded on page 214 of the Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Wake Forest College for June 11, 1879. The will is here given as found in the Minutes of Wake Forest College:

"I, Jesse Barnes, of Hertford County, and State of North Carolina, being very feeble in body, but sound in mind, and of disposing memory, do make and declare this to be my last will and Testament,

"In the first place, I give and dedicate my soul to God, in whom I trust and on whom I rely, for eternal salvation, believing that He will do all things well.

"In the next place I want all my just debts paid.

"Article first; I lend to my wife, Nancy, all my property of all kinds, as it now stands, both real and personal, Land, Negroes, Horses, Hogs, Sheep, Cattle, in full, all kinds of property of every description, including household kitchen furniture, and to remain with her as it is now or may be at my death, during her natural life. After her death, I leave and request my executors, or their representatives, to sell all that I have given to my wife her lifetime, viz: all my property of every description, and divide all proceeds equally (or if my executors think best not to sell, but think it best for the two institutions to do otherwise to divide without a sale, or rent, or hire out, they can use their own discretion) between the Trustees of Wake Forest College, and the Trustees of Chowan Baptist Female College, for the benefit of these two benevolent institutions.

"And lastly to carry out said plans and designs, I appoint my friends, Dr. A. J. Askew, and W. W. Mitchell, my executors

"Given under my hand and seal this the 30th day of May, 1863.

JESSE BARNES (Seal)"

Witnesses

Geo. W. Newsome

Andrew J. Askew

On page 213 of said Minutes of Wake Forest, dated June 10, 1879, the following note is recorded:

"It was ordered that the One Thousand Dollars bequeathed to Wake Forest College by Brother Barnes be made a part of the Endowment Fund."

Evidently when the estate was settled it netted \$2,000, and \$1,000 was given to each institution as the will directed.

Dr. A. Jack Askew was first a delegate to the Association in 1843 and W. W. Mitchell in 1850. These two last named men were among the great laymen in the Chowan Association. Other names occurring as delegates during this period were James Holloman, Joseph Holloman, Jno. S. Godwin, John Chamblee, J. B. Slaughter, R. B. Cobb, J. C. Jenkins, W. Slaughter, Geo. Holloman, W. O. Wynns.

In 1850 Wake Forest College began an effort to raise endowment by selling scholarships for \$500.00. Mr. James S. Purefoy was appointed to this work. His first effort was in the Chowan Association. "It was the church at Sawyer's Creek in Camden County that took the first scholarship and paid the \$500.00. This action stimulated the church at Ahoskie to a similar effort." (*Paschal's History of Wake Forest College*.) So Ahoskie seems to have been the second church to take a scholarship.

Rev. John Nowell died February 12, 1859, at an early age, 56. This pastorate alone is a worthy monument to him. He came to a church of 175 members and left a large church of 397. How he was loved and esteemed is given by Dr. A. Jack Askew who was appointed by the Chowan Association in 1859 to write the obituary for his pastor.

Obituary in part of Elder John Nowell:

"The subject of this short sketch was born in Hertford County, N. C., 6th day of September, 1803, near Colerain; near by he spent the most of his life. Elder John Nowell, soon after making a profession of religion was baptized on 18th of March, 1832, by Brother James Delk. As soon as he was received into the church, he immediately manifested a strong and earnest desire to work for the church and gain the salvation of sinners, which ever afterwards seemed to be the object of his living and laboring; and age nor time effaced from his mind "living for Christ." But grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength, and instead of losing that heaven-born zeal in his ripe years for the conversion of sinners, it has been burning on the altar of his breast ever since, and continued until the day of his death.

"The Colerain church granted him license to preach in June 1834. His preaching was so acceptable, his deportment so exceptional, his character so unsullied that in May 1835 (only a year after he commenced preaching and only three years after putting on Christ by baptism) the same church ordained him. In December his church called him as pastor and he remained there until the year preceding his death when he voluntarily resigned. He built up a large and influential body, the largest church in the Association.

"But his usefulness was not to be confined to Colerain and its vicinity. Ahoskie church was in need of a pastor; the Rev. George Williams resigned his pastorate to embark for the West in March 1836. Then Brother Nowell was called and remained with us till the hour of his death and his labors were blest.

"Although our Brother was a man of humble pretensions, yet he was a man of such qualities as we rarely, if ever, meet with. The writer of this humble tribute has known him long, and was intimately associated with him for about 25 years, and he can say with truth, that he was the most firm, constant, undeviating, unchangeable, upright man, he ever beheld and he acted as if he were always in the immediate presence of God. We have seen him in all the relations of life and he was always the same.

"His deportment before the world was loud preaching. He had a small farm from which he was principally supported; his church (Ahoskie), be it to their shame, gave him a mere pittance; but being prudent and economical he managed to live well and rear six or seven children. He had long been afflicted with a chronic affliction to which his system finally fell a victim. He was in a stupor nearly two days before his death. But death stole upon him slowly and entered his chamber as if he were about to encounter a strong man armed and he feared lest he might rise up in his strength and devour him. He expired on the 12th day of February, 1859, in his fifty-sixth year of age.

A. J. ASKEW, Chairman."

Thus ends the third pastorate of Ahoskie church—fifty-five years, 1804-1859.

CHAPTER II

1860-1889-PERIOD OF WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

B. B. Williams, 1860-1863

J. M. C. Luke, 1864-1868

John Mitchell, 1869-1871, 1886-87

R. R. Savage, 1872-1885

M. T. Williams, 1888-1889

B. B. Williams, 1860-1863

WAR, panics, depressions, etc., may come and go but churches move on. Thus we can truly say of Aboskie during the Civil War and the period of reconstruction that followed. Outside conditions do not close churches long, but inside conditions may close them indefinitely.



B. B. Williams

Rev. B. B. Williams, of Mars Hill in Bertie County, was called to the church as pastor following the death of Rev. John Nowell. When he came to this church the membership was reported as 397. He was with the church 4 years as pastor and left it with 409 members which speaks well for him. He baptized 36 people during his pastorate. Three years of the War had passed and, of course, it was thinning the ranks, making it more difficult to hold the number of members up. Elder Williams served both in the army and as pastor. He was Lieutenant in Company E, in the 68th N. C. Regiment. He had a deep interest in soldiers. In May 1862, he read his report on periodicals before the Association and then asked for a collection, which amounted to \$38.00, to pay for *Biblical Recorders* to distribute among the soldiers. Again at the Association in 1863 he appealed for an offering for the same pur-

pose. This offering amounted to \$332.30, in Confederate money. The pastor's unusual interest in the soldiers may account somewhat for the use of the church grounds and building at times during the war by the soldiers. By the year 1862 conditions were beginning to be hard. This was the only year the church ever failed to be represented at the association. No minute fund was sent with the church letter and many churches failed to send minute fund that year.

Elder Williams was an ardent dry. He probably did more during his day to push forward the cause of temperance in the Chowan section than any other preacher. He had a temperance lecture which he called, "The Dark Valley Railroad." This lecture made a deep impression upon many who heard it.

The Ahoskie church was fortunate not only in having a wise pastor as leader for those trying days but in having also some splendid laymen. Dr. A. J. Askew was one of Bertie's outstanding citizens. He was a man of great ability and used his ability for the glory of God. It is said of him that as a physician he never entered an account on a book. He was appointed by his church twenty times as a delegate to the association and was present sixteen times. In 1844 he was elected assistant clerk of the association. He was a liberal supporter of his church and denomination, especially Wake Forest College and Chowan College. He was a trustee of the latter for a number of years. He and W. W. Mitchell are named among the contributors to Wake Forest endowment prior to 1858.

At the meeting of the Chowan Association in 1860 A. J. Askew wrote the report on Periodicals:

"Your committee on Periodicals beg leave to submit the following report:

"There is perhaps no agency, aside from the preaching of the Gospel, that exerts a more forceful influence on the religious conditions of a people than the periodicals they read. The religious editor preaches weekly through his columns to five, ten or twenty thousand readers and each of these, reading and digesting the same truths, are gradually assimilated to each other in mind, thought and effort. And thus that unison of feeling and action is induced, which is so necessary to success in any enterprise. We ought,

therefore, to have our own periodicals, and we ought all, if possible, to read them."—A. J. Askew, Chairman.

Mr. Williams attended the meeting of the association at Ahoskie in 1899. At the close of the last session he was lifted by loving hands in his invalid's chair to the platform and he gave testimony to his victorious faith in Christ. The people were deeply moved by his words. This was his last appearance before the association in which he himself had been such a powerful force. About three months later he went home to be with his Lord.

He died in 1900 at the age of seventy-five. Elder J. A. Speight said of him in minutes of 1900:

"He was the last of that heroic and mighty band of men who under God helped to make this Chowan section what it is religiously, socially and intellectually. Brother Williams was born and reared near Mars Hill church, in Bertie County, N. C. He was a poor, illiterate boy, who no money himself and no moneyed friend to lend him a helping hand, but God gave to him a massive brain and a noble resolve to make the greatest possible use of this life, and he did it without that help which his early life held from himself and many of his collaborators, he became eminently successful, and without the aid of the schools which are so prolific today, he mastered all the problems which stood in the way of his becoming a fine practical scholar, and attained great mastery in Scriptural knowledge and pulpit power; and was admired and esteemed by his brethren and the churches which he served as only few men are. Brother Williams spent sixty-odd years in the service of his Lord, and about fifty of these years were spent in preaching the Gospel. . . .

"At various times he served as pastor at Mars Hill, Ahoskie, Holly Grove, Republican, Colerain, Pleasant Grove and Hebron, with short pastorates in other churches. Toward the close of life, Brother Williams became an invalid, and had to give up his active work in the ministry, and yet he was useful to the end and met his Bible class in the Sunday school at Harrellsville every Sunday, until a week or two before he went to Heaven. In his invalid's chair he closed his life at the home of his brother, J. T. Williams, for his wife had preceded him a few years to the spirit world."

Capt. J. M. C. Luke, 1864—1868

The dark picture from the point of view of the church of 1862 and '63 was not to remain so long. Elder J. M. C. Luke was reported a member of the Ahoskie Church in 1860. He was captain of company "D" of the 17th N. C., Regiment,

which was composed almost entirely of Hertford County men. He resigned as captain and became pastor of the church in 1864. This year a great revival swept the church and community. Evidently the distribution of *Biblical Records* by Elder Williams is now to bear fruit. The oldest people speak of it as "the revival during the War." The number baptized that year was 113, the greatest number ever baptized in one year. Mr. Luke was with the church five years and baptized 168 persons.

By the year 1866 the question of what to do about the colored members of the white churches became acute and the question was put to the Chowan Association meeting at Ballard's Bridge. A. McDowell, R. R. Overby and John Mitchell, who was the next pastor at Ahoskie, were appointed to answer the question. The following sensible and Christian resolution was offered and adopted:

"REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON COLORED MEMBERS"

"Your committee to whom was referred the relation of the colored members of our churches, recommend that those who choose to retain their membership in our churches be permitted to do so with the same status as heretofore; and those who may wish to join us be received on the same terms. To those who wish to withdraw in order to form churches of their own, we advise our churches to grant letters of dismission and to give them sympathy and assistance so far as practical in organizing regular churches for themselves."

During the year 1866 the First Baptist church, colored, was organized at Ahoskie. The minutes show that Ahoskie had 115 colored members in 1866 and the next year only 1. This one remained until 1869 and no colored members were reported after that. So this First Baptist church, Colored, is the second branch of Ahoskie.

The Chowan Association met the second time with Ahoskie on Tuesday, May 14, 1867. The introductory sermon was preached by R. R. Overby on Ex. 14:15; and on Thursday Dr. W. M. Wingate of Wake Forest preached the convention sermon. Elder J. H. Philip preached in the grove.

It was customary in those days to present queries from

the churches to the association for answers, as was done the year before about the colored members. The following query was presented at this time:

"What ought a church do with a member who, having the ability, refuses to give anything to defray the expenses of the church?"

"Answer: Such member should be excommunicated." Regardless of what was in the mind of the body when this answer was given, many of the churches since have practically made "giving to the church" a basis for continued church membership.

The following note is given on this meeting of the Association at Ahoskie:

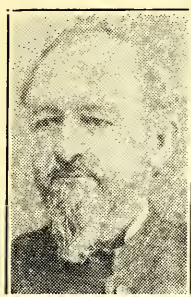
"After an interesting discussion of the report on the Baptist State Convention (now State Missions) a collection was taken which amounted to \$102.00 in cash and \$206.00 in pledges."

Elder Luke resigned at Ahoskie in 1868 to go to Plymouth, N. C. During his five years as pastor he had been a delegate from the church to the association each year, which shows that he was a member of Ahoskie. He and the first pastor, Hillary Morris, were the only two so far to hold their membership here. The minutes of the Chowan Association give more information from the churches beginning with the year 1868. This last year of Capt. Luke with the church was one of progress. Only six were baptized but a Sunday School is again reported with 73 pupils and Williamson Askew superintendent. The gifts of the church exceeded any amount reported before, \$797.00. The money was given as follows: Church expenses \$250, State Missions \$20, Foreign Missions \$7, Wake Forest College \$520, miscellaneous \$27. It is probable that this large amount to Wake Forest was for the endowment. The clerk was J. S. Mitchell, Winton.

Dr. John Mitchell, 1869-1871, 1886-1887

He was known among the men who knew him best as "the Beloved Disciple." From 1855-58 he acted as agent for

Wake Forest College and helped to complete its endowment; in 1890 he became Secretary of the Board of Education. "He



**Dr. Jno.
Mitchell**

was a saintly man, he was also most liberal, having given freely to the Mills Home at Thomasville, where he provided the funds to erect the building called for his name, and having also been one of the two principal givers for the erection of the Wake Forest College Hospital, and having made many other gifts to the college. He was also a frequent contributor to Chowan College of which, as well as of Wake Forest College, he was Trustee". (*Paschal's History of Wake Forest College*). Thus Ahoskie was privileged to share for five years in the wide

experience, deep learning and warm spiritual life of this noble man as their pastor. He is the only pastor who served the church in two pastorates. He served three years the first time and came back fourteen years later and served two years. He baptized 94 during his first years, which was a substantial growth.

Williamson Askew continued Sunday School superintendent during Dr. Mitchell's first pastorate. From the report of 1870 and '71 the number of pupils in Sunday School exactly doubled, 138 pupils. This may be partly accounted for by the erection of a new building in 1870. This was the fourth building and is the one now owned by the Presbyterians, though it has been remodeled three times. Henry Modlin hewed some of the sills for the house and William Henry Miller and Dick Jordan, a colored man, sawed most of the lumber with a rip saw. This building cost about \$1000. The clerks during this pastorate were W. C. Jenkins and W. W. Mitchell.

The delegates to the association reported from the church during the last three pastorates were: A. J. Askew, W. W. Mitchell, T. A. Slaughter, W. C. Jenkins, Mills Sumner, J. S.

Godwin, J. M. C. Luke, H. Modlin, William Askew, James Holloman, William Freeman, and J. P. Freeman.

Robert Risop Savage, 1872—1885

This was the third longest pastorate in the history of the church thus far, 22, 24 and 14 years respectively. Elder Savage came from Nansemond County, Virginia. He attended Wake Forest College and while a student led in the organization of a Sunday School in the Wake Forest Church and was its first superintendent. Dr. Paschal says of him, "He was a fit man to stand first on the long list of worthy men who have succeeded him in the same office."



R. R. Savage

He and Prof. Mills were room-mates from August 1857 to June 1860, the year he graduated. Prof. Mills described Mr. Savage as "a gentle, pure-hearted soul—a man of large common sense, a devoted Christian." He was a college debater. Dr. Paschal says that the two questions of absorbing interest at the college before the Civil War were slavery and secession. "Only once was the decision of the debate adverse to the Southern viewpoint." This one exception was on August 6, 1858, when the Euzelians debated the query, "Will African slavery be perpetual in the United States?" R. R. Savage was one of three on the negative side of the query and they won the decision 12 to 88. "Later some reader of the minutes penciled between the lines in bold hand, 'O ye Abolitionists!'"

After his graduation in 1860 he soon came to Buckhorn Baptist church at Como in this Association and then spent the remainder of his life here. He was a trustee of Wake Forest College and of the Chowan Institute.

Elder Savage baptized 184 during his pastorate.

Brantley's Grove, which was the third offspring of Ahoskie, was organized in 1877. This same year, the Chowan Association met with Ahoskie for the third time. The introduc-

tory sermon was preached on Tuesday by O. C. Horton on Col. 3:11, at 3 p. m. J. A. Speight preached in the grove. Thursday the Convention sermon was by Elder Babb on Matt. 21:28, and at the same time Elder Richard preached in the grove; and in the afternoon Elder C. L. Powell preached in the grove. The *Biblical Recorder* of May 30, 1877, gives an interesting story of this meeting. The part that relates to Ahoskie is given here.

"By eleven o'clock on Tuesday, we (Editor C. T. Bailey and Prof. L. R. Mills) reached Ahoskie church and to our surprise found at least 2000 persons on the grounds. The brethren and sisters for miles around had opened their homes to the people, and had also made ample arrangements for feeding the thousands at the church. No one was overlooked, no one neglected. Each Delegate and visitor felt at home and thought he had been specially favored by the committee on hospitality."

At this session W. W. Mitchell was chairman of the committee on hospitality. Elder B. B. Williams was appointed alternate for the introductory sermon next year at Shiloh and Elder Savage was appointed to preach the missionary sermon. The committee on time and place of the next meeting reported. The *Biblical Recorder* said of it, "The report was adopted without discussion . . . the first instance of the kind that we have ever witnessed in any association." The closing part of of the *Biblical Recorder* report says:

"This was one of the most delightful sessions of this great Baptist body that we have ever attended. The weather was fine and the attendance each day immense. The hospitality of the community was heavily taxed but was fully equal to the occasion. All the great enterprises of the denomination were fully discussed and the preachers were singularly able and earnest. The spirit of the meeting was also excellent.

"The Chowan Association has been fortunate in its past history. From the first it has been a succession of able and earnest men in the Ministry and, what is equally important,

has had a large number of intelligent, active and influential laymen. Her future as judged by the past and present is bright with promise. With ministers such as McDowell, Overby, John Hoggard and Ben Williams, Savage, Babb, Wood, Horton and Vann; and with such laymen as W. W. Mitchell and J. W. Mitchell, Norman Shaw and Moses Gillam, Key and Henry Edwards, Abram Bonner, A. Whitaker, Myers, Lang Tayloe and Prof. Delk, what may we not hope for in the coming years? We mention these names because they occur to us as we write. There is a host of others equally as earnest and active. Nor are we to leave out of this estimate the silent but potential influence exerted by a very large number of pious, cultured and refined women who are to be found in all the churches."

In reviewing the records of the Chowan in those early days it is soon discovered that Wake Forest College had a big place in the work of the Association, and Ahoskie was one of the most loyal churches in support of the college. At the meeting in 1882 it was decided to appoint a committee of two in each church who were to interest parents and children in education and to report those interested to Prof. Brewer. The committee appointed for Ahoskie were L. R. Cobb and J. P. Freeman. To further show the interest of the Association in the college at the meeting in 1869 at Bethlehem, a collection was taken and here is what was given, \$66.30, a barrel of flour and a keg of fish. (Evidently these were the famous Chowan herrings.)

In 1883 St. Johns church, the fourth daughter of Ahoskie, was organized. That same year at Harrellsville in May it was decided to divide the Chowan Association. Many of the churches called for their letters at that time but Ahoskie did not. However, Ahoskie did have delegates present at Winton, July 27, 1883, at the preliminary meeting for organizing a new association. W. W. Mitchell was elected moderator of this meeting and presided at the regular meeting on October 16-18, 1883, until regular election of officers. Ahoskie was

represented at this first session of the West Chowan by L. R. Cobb and W. W. Mitchell.

Ahoskie was a member of the Kehukee Association one year, joined 1805, then helped to organize the Chowan in 1806 with seventeen others and remained with the body seventy-seven years. Only one year, during the Civil War, the delegates did not get to the meeting. Then in 1883 it was one of the 33 churches that organized the West Chowan Association. From this point on when "the association" is used it will be the West Chowan.

The third meeting, 1885, of the West Chowan proved to be history making. Elder J. D. Hufham introduced the following resolution:

"Whereas, it hath entered into the hearts of some of our brethren to build an orphanage in which the indigent children of our deceased brethren may be cared for; and

"Whereas, this is a work of exceeding great importance, commended to us by the very Spirit of our Savior; therefore,

"Resolved, that we do hereby express our hearty sympathies with this movement and our thankfulness that it has been organized in our day.

"Resolved, that we do here and now take steps to build an Orphan House to be called the West Chowan Orphan House." These resolutions were not passed but the following substitute was:

"Resolved that we do here and now take steps to raise \$1250 to be disposed of in the interest of the Baptist Orphanage of North Carolina, and at the discretion of the Orphan Association."

These resolutions are given in full because this was the beginning of the orphanage work among West Chowan Baptists which has ever had a large place in the giving of the Ahoskie Church. As soon as the substitute resolution was passed the roll of churches was called for pledges to be paid by March 1, 1886. Ahoskie pledged \$50 and paid \$54. During these fifty-two years since the total amount given by this church has amounted to thousands of dollars for this object.

Another question of serious importance at this third session of the Association was temperance. A far reaching resolution was adopted with grave apprehension on the part of some.

"Resolved that from this meeting henceforth this Asso-

ciation withdraw fellowship from any church that countenances the manufacture or sale of ardent spirits by its members."

The next year Elder B. B. Williams, a former pastor of Ahoskie, made the report on "The Evils of Strong Drink." Near the close of the report he said:

"Oh! the evils of alcohol! Eternity alone will reveal them all. Now what can be done to counteract these evils? The first and one very important step was taken at the last session of your body. It shows that the eyes of some have been opened to see the evils. At all hazards maintain your position. To go back would be ruinous."

Following his report and a lengthy discussion by many, another resolution supporting the first one was adopted by a roll-call of the churches, Ayes 50, Noes 16. Lafayette Holloman, T. J. Vann and R. B. Odom were the delegates from Ahoskie and all three supported the resolution.

The historian, C. W. Scarborough, in 1886 said of this report:

"No session of the Association has been more harmonious, though it was feared by Christians and hoped by the enemies of the cause of Christ, that division and unpleasantness would arise in the discussion of the report on Temperance. This report approved a resolution passed at the sessions of 1885." So the victory was won, which was to have great influence upon this section down through the years.

In 1884 the association appointed a member in each church to represent Home Missions. J. P. Freeman was appointed for Ahoskie. The next year Kindred Holloman was appointed and was reappointed until 1891 when these representatives were no more named.

The delegates who represented Ahoskie at the Association during Elder Savage's pastorate were W. W. Mitchell, J. P. Freeman, James Holloman, Geo. Brown, Nicholas Harrell, J. S. Mitchell, Henry Modlin, Thomas M. Parker, L. R. Cobb, B. F. Barham, A. J. Godwin, J. A. Copeland, Lafayette

Holloman, T. J. Vann.

Church clerks were W. W. Mitchell, Thomas M. Parker, Geo. A. Brown, T. J. Vann.

Sunday School Superintendents were William Askew, Joseph Holloman, Geo. Brown and W. W. Holloman, James S. Mitchell, Henry Modlin and J. A. Copeland, Richard S. Newsome and B. Odom, W. H. Miller, James Freeman, Joseph R. Byrum and R. H. Overton.

It is fitting to review here the life of W. W. Mitchell. From 1850 to 1878 he was a delegate twenty-seven times to the Association, served as clerk for a number of years and was the biggest giver Ahoskie had up to this time.

B. B. Winborne in his *History of Hertford County*, says of him: "Mr. Mitchell was one of the patriarchs of the county. He was chairman of the County Court from June, 1861 to 1866, and had served the county as one of its leading justices for twenty-five years. He was a man of stern and positive character and a strong member in his church and denomination from early manhood to his death (1897), and a great advocate of education. He was an uncompromising Baptist in his religious faith, and gave liberally of his large means to the advancement of its cause. He was one of the movers in the building and establishment of Chowan Baptist Female Institute, and contributed largely to the expense and was chairman of its board of trustees for a number of years until his health became so enfeebled that he declined further election. During his active life he was always ready to respond to its needs, and faithfully attended all meetings of the trustees, and his face was familiar on the rostrum at the annual commencement exercises. He married the sister of the late Rev. John Mitchell, who was so well known throughout North Carolina."

Rev. C. W. Scarborough, historian for the Association in 1897, said of him:

"W. W. Mitchell was until enfeebled by age, a prince and a leader among us. He was an uncompromising Baptist, he was

proud of his denomination and of its work; he was liberal in his support of the institutions established and fostered by his people. He gave largely to the Baptist Orphanage, and gave more to Chowan Baptist Female Institute than any one else. He gave to the Institute the princely sum of \$12,000."

His life with that of Dr. A. Jack Askew, whose life story has already been given, covers almost a half century. These two worked side by side for many years. They largely helped to make Ahoskie one of the leading churches of the Chowan Association in their day.

H. T. Williams, 1888-1889

Following Elder Savage, Dr. John Mitchell was called back to the church for two years. This pastorate has already been covered.

Rev. H. T. Williams of Sunbury was called as pastor and remained with the church two years. He was pastor at Union also. The church took a forward step in Elder Williams' second year in going to twice-a-month preaching, at a salary of \$350.00. There were only two churches that gave as much and they gave more, Mt. Tabor \$400.00 and Ross \$450.00.

This advance was also seen in gifts to Foreign Missions. The church had done very little for this cause until 1889. At the meeting of the Association in 1888, it was decided to adopt Rev. and Mrs. T. C. Britton as their own missionaries. They sailed for China just after the meeting and arrived December 31, 1888. That same year Mrs. Lillian Wright Chastain went to Mexico. All three went from the West Chowan Association. This greatly added interest in all the churches for Foreign Missions. Ahoskie gave nothing for this cause in 1886, but went to \$40.00 in '89 and \$52.00 in 1900. This increased interest on the part of the church has continued most of the time since.

The first Missionary society in the church was organized about this time. Mrs. Bettie Vann was the first president. The society was composed of both women and men, and met just

after service. It was was in operation only a few years.

Solon B. Jernigan was clerk and R. H. Overton Sunday School superintendent during this pastorate. Elder Williams baptized 35 during his two years. The delegates to the Association were Dr. J. H. Mitchell, William Vaughan, James D. Jenkins, Joseph B. Slaughter, John W. Wynns, James O. Parker.

C. W. Scarborough in 1890 said of the year 1889: "It is probable that for Eastern North Carolina, no year since 1867 yielded a poorer harvest than 1889: our churches have, therefore, been hard pressed financially. But rich or poor, the Lord's servants will press His work."

This year, 1889, ushered in a new era for the church. For the past 85 years always "Ahoskie" had been the church. But now a postoffice has been established just one-half mile west of the church and it was given the name of the church, "Ahoskie." A little log railroad ran by the postoffice and it was replaced very soon by a wide-guage railroad and a station located near the postoffice and that was named "Ahoskie." So from this time on there will be a distinction between the place, Ahoskie, and the church, Ahoskie.

CHAPTER III

1890-1917, FIRST PERIOD WITH THE GROWTH OF THE TOWN

Braxton Craig, 1890-1895

J. K. Fant, 1896-1897

R. D. Cross, 1898-1900

L. M. Curtis, 1901-1907

M. A. Adams, 1908-1910

C. L. Dowell, 1911-1917

Braxton Craig, 1890-1895

HE WAS born in Bertie County, North Carolina, October 8, 1863. In his early childhood his father died and he was deprived of the care and guidance of a father; but his mother was a noble, capable woman, and he and the other children were well reared; he becoming a minister of the Word and his brother, Locke Craig, serving the great State of North Carolina for four years as Governor."—(*Taylor's History of Tar River Baptist Association.*)



Rev. Braxton Craig

Mr. Craig attended the University of North Carolina and was then ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry. His first pastorate was Ahoskie. He was called early in 1890 and remained with the church six years.

This was a very trying period financially. The people had little money in 1890, because of the very poor crops of 1889, on account of so much rain. Then came the panic of 1893. For a few years

cotton sold for four and five cents per pound. The church went to preaching twice a month in 1889 at a salary of \$350.00 but the salary was only \$300.00 from 1890 to 1892 and then in 1893 the church dropped back to preaching one Sunday per month at a salary of \$200.00. However, it is interesting to note that there was no decrease in the amount given for missions and benevolences during this period.

The church owned no pastor's home when Mr. Craig moved to Ahuskie. So the next year the church bought a lot on Church Street (where J. N. Vann's residence is now) from James T. Wynns and his wife, Sarah, for \$200.00. The deed was made to T. J. Vann, W. H. Jernigan and A. A. Mitchell, trustees. The church then built the first pastor's home. This was sold to the pastor the next year for \$1,000.00. The deed is dated April 25, 1892.

In 1891 the committee on Foreign Missions reported to the association that the next year was the centennial of mission work and that the Southern Baptist Convention requested all District Associations to provide for some presentation of the result of mission work during the past one hundred years. The pastor, Braxton Craig, was put on the committee to prepare the program for the Missionary Centennial. The report on Foreign Missions in 1892 was prepared by L. M. Curtis and L. N. Hoggard. "The missionary spirit of the Baptist Denomination is its greatest strength, and its missionary record its greatest glory."

At the meeting of the association the following resolutions were adopted:

"Whereas, We are in the midst of the great centennial year of modern missions.

"Resolved, 1st, That it is the sense of your committee that we, as an association, make a heroic effort to raise our part of the two hundred and fifty thousand dollars as a centennial fund.

"Resolved, 2nd, That the encouraging progress on our foreign fields calls for deeper consecration and greater sacrifice

on our part, and larger contributions in men, women, and means."

That year, 1892, the churches of the West Chowan Association resolved to make a heroic effort to raise their part of the \$250,000 as a centennial fund. During 1937 the receipts of the Foreign Mission Board amounted to \$1,077,996.34. If the churches forty-seven years ago had much to encourage them, we have far more today. Surely the results on the foreign fields during the first half of this second century exceed their greatest hopes.

The first dollar given by Ahoskie for foreign missions in 1819 grew to \$50.00 per year during most of Mr. Craig's pastorate.

Mr. Craig early in his pastorate led some brethren, Sumner Newsome, Bill Jernigan and others, in a movement that has influenced the town through the years since. The distance of one mile was measured from the church each way and a vote taken as to whether intoxicating liquors should be sold within this area. The opposition was so strong that the measuring was done at night and Pastor Craig was threatened to be beaten. The election, however, was carried against the sale of liquor and no liquor has ever been sold legally in Ahoskie.

The first mid-week prayer meeting was started by Mr. Craig. The boys and girls took lamps with them to light the church. Mrs. Mary Craig Jenkins was one of the attendants at the first services.

About 1895 the Thomasville Orphanage singing class made its first visit to Ahoskie. Mr. Mills had twelve girls with him. The program was given one morning in the week. The offering amounted to \$100.00 and a box of meat.

The delegates to the association during this pastorate were R. H. Overton, Jno. W. Wynns, LaFayette Holloman, I. P. Newsome, Kindred Holloman, T. E. Vann, W. L. Grimes, W. H. Jernigan, R. B. Odom, A. K. Newsome, W. H. Miller and D. E. Newsome.

The Sunday School superintendents were R. H. Overton.

T. J. Vann, LaFayette Holloman and W. H. Jernigan; the church clerks were Solon Jernigan, T. J. Vann and J. C. Jenkins. Mr. Craig baptized seventy-seven during his pastorate. The membership was 290 when he became pastor and 334 when he resigned to go to Virginia.

Rev. J. K. Fant, 1896-1897

Elder Fant was born in Anderson County, S. C. He was ordained at sixteen; graduated at Furman University in 1873 and from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1875, in the class with Dr. R. T. Vann. The seminary was then located at Greenville, S. C.

He came to Ahoskie in April 1896 from Littleton but his pastorate was to be the shortest in the history of the church. His health failed in the summer of the next year, 1897, and he moved back to South Carolina in December of that year hoping to regain his health, but he died April 1, 1900. He was a faithful, loving shepherd and an humble follower of his Lord.

The first organ was purchased for the church about 1896. Mrs. Fant and her daughter, May, were first organists. J. C. Jenkins was leader of the singing for many years. Also the first Baptist Training Union was organized during this pastorate, about 1897. All who attended, young and old, were considered members. Mrs. Lou Fant, M. C. Williams, Mrs. Mary Overton Elliott, Misses Maud and Mina Holloman were very active in the organization and served as presidents of the union.

Thirty-three were baptized during his year and a half pastorate.

Center Grove was organized in 1897, the fifth daughter to leave the mother church, Ahoskie. Seventy-five members were granted letters of dismission from Ahoskie during 1897 and 1898 and most of them went to Center Grove.

Rev. R. D. Cross, 1898-1900

This pastorate of three years marked a low ebb in the church life in some respects. Low prices for farm crops prevailed;

seventy-five members had gotten letters to organize Center Grove; W. W. Mitchell, the church's largest giver, died the year before. As a result of these things the pastor's salary was reduced in 1897 to \$175.00 and remained the same through 1900.

After Mr. Craig resigned this left the church without a home for the pastor. The next summer W. W. Mitchell gave the church a two-acre lot where the pastor's home is at present. The deed was dated July 18, 1896. The trustees, to whom the deed was made, were W. H. Jernigan, T. J. Vann and A. A. Mitchell. The church then built the second pastor's home and the following receipt is recorded:

"This is to certify that J. R. Garrett has received payment in full from Ahoskie Baptist Church for building the parsonage, this October 22, 1898. (Signed) J. R. Garrett."

However, Mr. Cross did not move to Ahoskie until the fall of 1899 after he had been pastor of the church for two years. Rev. Alex Speight rented the parsonage and was the first to occupy it.

The West Chowan Association met with Ahoskie the fourth time in 1899. In September the church appointed a committee on hospitality, W. H. Miller, J. C. Jenkins and D. E. Newsome. At that time the association met three days, Tuesday to Thursday, October 24-26. "On Tuesday night a mass meeting was held on Temperance. L. M. Curtis, B. B. Williams, E. S. Pearce and J. C. Caddell addressed the body. On Wednesday night a mass meeting was held on Foreign Missions. The meeting was addressed by Dr. Jno. E. White, of Raleigh, State secretary of missions. The meeting was a grand success, and doubtless the work was laid nearer the hearts of the brethren."

C. W. Scarborough offered the following resolution: "That we recommend to the Woman's Missionary Societies to report their work to the association through the church letters as a part of the church work." This was a needed action for the missionary societies were growing rapidly.

Some interesting notes on this meeting of the association are given in the Biblical Recorder of November 15, 1899. Editor J. C. Caddell was present and reported the meeting.

"The weather was never finer and the people literally poured in; the crowd at its best was estimated variously from twenty-five hundred to three thousand."

"Many old Wake Forest boys found pleasure in shaking hands with Professor Mills. An old student of Wake Forest said to me, 'Mills can work out a way for a boy to go to Wake Forest with as much ease as he can work a problem in mathematics'."

"I spent the time in the home of Mrs. Downs. She is a member of the Episcopal Church, and yet there are few, if any, in Ahoskie, who feel a more substantial interest in the Baptist work."

"Brother Lang Tayloe is in feeble health, but he came to the association one day. He always pays two years subscription to the Recorder and also sends the paper to two others (widows)."

This item is found in the historian's report for the association that year:

"At the first session in 1833 Brother Etherton Wilson was a delegate from Colerain Church, sixty-six years ago; this brother, now nearing his ninetieth year, was a delegate from the same church."

The present Woman's Missionary Society of the church was organized in the late fall of 1899. Seven ladies met one night in the pastor's home with Mrs. Cross and the eight composed the charter members. They were, Mrs. R. D. Cross, Mrs. Tom Greene, Mrs. J. R. Garrett, Mrs. J. C. Jenkins, Mrs. Robert Holloman, Mrs. Susie Holloman Floyd, Mrs. D. L. Myers, Mrs. Mary Overton Elliott. Mrs. Elliott was elected president and Mrs. Susie Holloman Floyd was secretary. This was the beginning of what has become a great force in the church. The society soon organized a Sunbeam Band and at the association in 1900 it reported \$4.56 given.

Mr. Cross baptized 43 during his pastorate. Delegates to the association during the last two pastorates were: W. H. Jernigan, D. E. Newsome, J. W. Dilday, C. S. Godwin, J. W. Wynns, W. H. Miller, W. J. Greene, J. J. Vann, J. H. Mitchell, J. C. Jenkins and T. J. Vann. Sunday school superintendent during this same period was W. H. Jernigan; church clerks were B. E. Copeland and T. J. Vann.

L. M. Curtis, 1901-1907

Mr. Curtis came to Ahoskie with the turn of the century and his pastorate saw the church complete the first one hundred years of her history. The turn of the new century brought a new day for the church. The South was by this time rapidly

overcoming the ravages of the Civil War and a new growing town at the front door of the church gave a large opportunity and a brighter outlook. No longer is it to be a country church standing lonely at the fork of two roads.



Rev. L. M. Curtis

The coming of Rev. L. M. Curtis as pastor put a strong man facing a challenging situation. Elder Curtis was called at a special conference on Friday before the second Sunday in November, 1900. His pastorate began January 1, 1901.

At the February conference the following committee was appointed to make needed repairs on the pastor's home, W. H. Miller, R. S. Newsome, J. R. Garrett, J. C. Jenkins and D. L. Myers. The repairs were made at a cost of \$70.00. At the conference in March "Brother Curtis, on behalf of the sisters,

presented a handsome bell to our church. On motion, the church gratefully received the bell." Mrs. Fannie Griffith Jenkins was most active in raising the funds to purchase it. The following committee was appointed to build a place for the bell, J. C. Jenkins, R. H. Overton, D. L. Myers, J. R. Garrett, W. H. Jernigan, D. E. Newsome, T. J. Vann and pastor, L. M. Curtis. In May the committee recommended the building of a vestibule and tower at a probable cost of \$200.00. This report was adopted.

At a called conference in August, 1901, Mr. Curtis was given an indefinite call at a salary of \$350.00, thus going back to preaching two Sundays a month and doubling the salary over the year before.

It was the custom in those days for brethren and sisters to visit other churches on their conference days. Frequently such visitors from sister churches were invited to sit with the church in conference. In May and June, 1902, Dr. R. P. Thomas of Bethlehem was a visitor. He was moderator of the association for fourteen years. In the fall of 1902 T. J. Vann and family moved to Aulander. In December the church granted letters of dismission to them. The church lost two active members in Mr. and Mrs. Vann. Beginning in 1885 Mr. Vann served the church eleven years as clerk, three years as Sunday school superintendent, and was a delegate to the association five times. Mrs. Bettie Vann was president of the first missionary society, taught in the Sunday school for many years and was active in the singing in the church when there was no musical instrument there. They moved back to their old home and to Ahoskie church nine years later, March, 1911.

An interesting note by the historian is given in the associational minutes of 1904:

"Better prices and fairly good crops have made it easy for our people to increase their gifts.—E. J. Harrell."

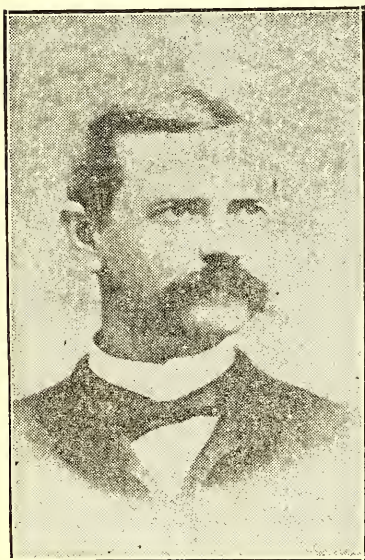
In August the church voted to build "an infant classroom" to the church and the contract to build was given to J. R. Garrett. Mrs. Mary Overton Elliott, teacher, led in the

purchase of a small portable organ.

On the fourth Sunday in July, 1906, the Methodist Church of Ahoskie was dedicated. The morning service was postponed until the evening so that the church might join with the Methodist friends in their dedication.

Elder Curtis baptized during his seven years as pastor 97. The membership of the church was 300 when he came and was 368 when he resigned, because of ill health. T. J. Vann and Robert Holloman were the clerks during this pastorate; W. H. Miller, J. S. Matthews and A. O. Kiff were Sunday school superintendents; delegates to the association were, W. H. Miller, T. J. Vann, W. H. Jernigan, J. C. Jenkins, D. E. Newsome, J. S. Mitchell, Wilmer Modlin, R. H. Overton, R. S. Newsome, D. L. Myers, J. B. Modlin, L. R. Dilday, J. P. Harrell and A. B. Cowan; the gifts of the church went from \$350.00 to \$871.00.

The officers of the Woman's Missionary Society and auxiliaries are given here as reported: Presidents, Mrs. T. H. Overton, Mrs. R. F. Leary, Mrs. Fannie Miller, Mrs. E. Hayes, Mrs. D. L. Myers, and Mrs. R. E. Cowan; secretaries, Miss Dora Newsome and Mrs. D. L. Myers; leaders of Sunbeams, Mrs. Mabel Leary Copeland and Miss Mary Wynn Vaughan.



W. P. Shaw

In May, 1907, the church voted to donate one acre of the parsonage lot for the purpose of erecting a public school on it. The lot was not accepted.

The last year Mr. Curtis was pastor, 1909, he was in feeble health. In April the church

granted him a leave of absence for three months, hoping that he might regain his health. But there was no improvement and he was forced to give up the work in the fall on account of his health.

At the meeting of the association in Aulander in 1908, W. P. Shaw read resolutions relating to L. M. Curtis. Then he spoke to the resolutions as follows: (The address is given in part.)

"It is to me a sad privilege, a melancholy pleasure to think and speak of the exalted character and generous attributes, as I knew them, of our dear friend and esteemed brother, L. M. Curtis.

"He was born in the county of Randolph on the 25th day of June, 1852. He never remembered his father, who died when he was an infant, leaving him to the care of his mother, with whom he lived on a farm, till her death, which occurred about the time he was approaching manhood.

"He attended the schools of his home, and Rutherford College, and possessing a quick and strong intellect and endowed with a healthy body and great energy, he secured for himself a good education, and commenced his life work as a teacher in the schools.

"On the 22nd day of February, 1881, he married Miss Dora E. Vann, of the county of Sampson, and to this union were born three sons and one daughter.

"His first church relations were with the Methodists, and he was an active and influential member of that denomination until about the year 1885, when he connected himself with the Baptists and entered the ministry of this denomination. In the year 1887, he attended the Baptist Seminary at Louisville, taking a double course of studies, and graduated from that school. Returning home, his first active work was in the Tar River association with Scotland Neck as his home. In the year 1890 he was called to preach for Aulander church in this Association, and one year later made Aulander his home, where he preached for the church ten years. He then removed to Ahoskie, where he spent the remainder of his life. He served as pastor of Bethlehem church for fifteen years, Center Grove church ten years, and Ahoskie church seven years, terminating his active services with his church only when impaired health and physical weakness forced him to retire from his life's work. For the welfare of the churches he retained and expressed the deepest interest until the time of his death, which occurred at his home on the evening of July 28, 1908, casting a shadow of the deepest sorrow. Truly, a strong and beautiful column in the edifice of our hopes, our aspiration and our christian endeavor had fallen. A strong staff on which we had long learned to lean so implicitly, and to trust so confidently, had been broken, leaving a deep sorrow, which we

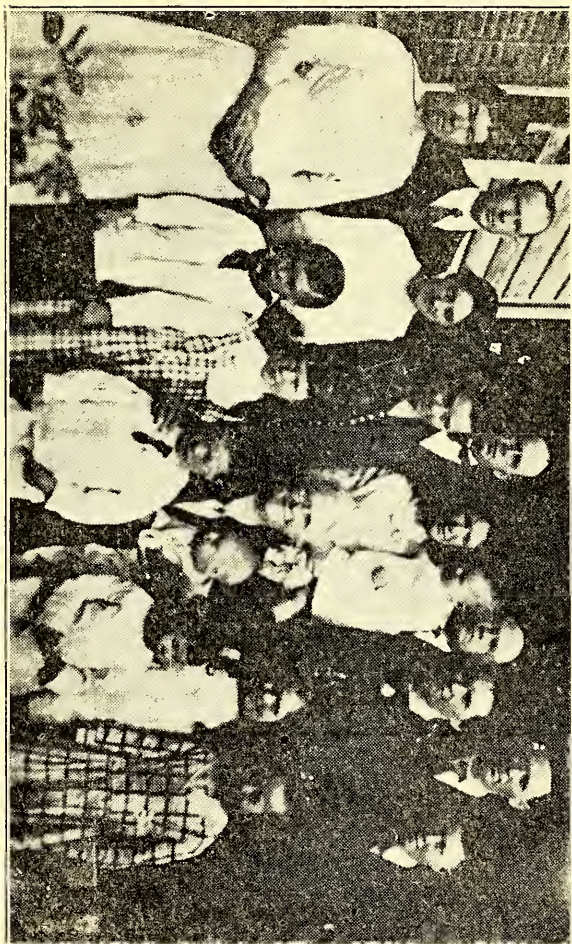
can only trust that time may heal, a mighty void which we pray that Heaven may fill.

"Some time since, with sad hearts, we gently deposited in the narrow confines of the grave all that was mortal of our brother, Dr. John Mitchell, who for more than a half century had lived among us, known and recognized as the beloved disciple of faith, the real embodiment of true friendship and the ideal representation of the Christian graces. And turning sadly our faces from his last earthly resting place, which the hands of love and affection had bedecked with flowers, looking to the future, the thought came to our mind, who would take his place? I do not know how it seemed to others, but to me it appeared that the general consensus of opinion pointed unmistakably to Elder L. M. Curtis, who we trusted might live long to stand in the place occupied by Dr. John Mitchell in the hearts of our people, whom he had served so well.

"But, alas! for human expectations. A higher voice has spoken. "My ways are not man's ways. My thoughts are not his thoughts. And before the shadow on the dial-plate of time had far passed the noon hour of his life, the fatal malady had taken him in its grasp, and we watched with dreaded apprehension the wasting away of his rotund and manly form. Then at times we were cheered at the signs of returning strength, and the bright cheer of his genial good nature, bid us hope, and now and then we thought there were signs that his great strength might prove equal to its task. And we did hope on, and prayed on, but at last the silver cord drawn to its utmost tension is broken . . .

"Coming among us strong, buoyant and hopeful in the full vigor of maturing manhood, endowed with large mental powers, possessed of a magnificent physique, a cheery, bright disposition, and a love for his work, which helped to make it more easy, we thought of his great promise of many years, and some of us looked forward with hopeful expectancy, that when our eyes should grow dim and our footsteps falter, he would be to us a strong support, upon which we might lean with confident trust, and that he might be permitted to aid in the last sad rites which the kind hands of love and friendship could contribute. But he has fallen and now sleeps with his fathers. But who will say that in the higher, the spiritual sense, that L. M. Curtis is dead?

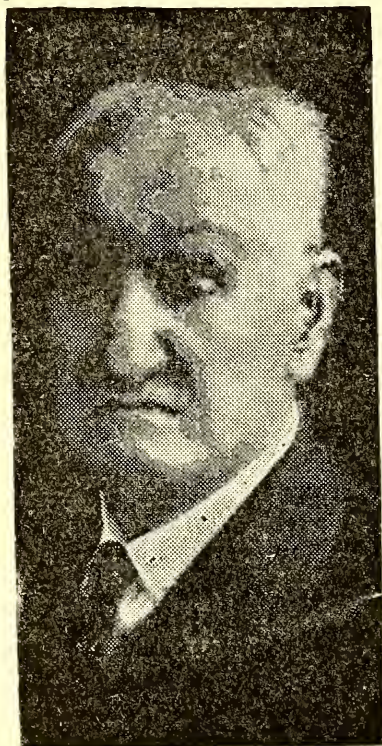
"In the power of discernment, in the affairs of the church, in social relations, in matters of business, he was strong and resourceful. His power of analysis was large, and he was quick to see the relation which one thing bears to another. He brought to his advice and counsel inspiration and wisdom. He accepted with a steady faith, without doubt or hesitation, the Old and the New Testament scriptures, and seemed to possess the divine sentiment which in the midst of life's afflictions and sorrows, lights up the soul with rays of consolation and hope, and he was ready to dispense this sentiment to others. To his friends, his church, his country, and his work, in their prosperity and adversity, in their bright days and cloudy days, he was ever the same kind friend, trusted brother, true patriot, and unswerving Christian minister.



The Family of Rev. L. M. Curtis

M. A. Adams, 1908-1910

At the conference in November, 1907, Rev. M. A. Adams was called as pastor for the next year at a salary of \$400.00 and parsonage. Brothers J. B. Modlin, J. C. Jenkins and W. H.



Miller were appointed to see him.

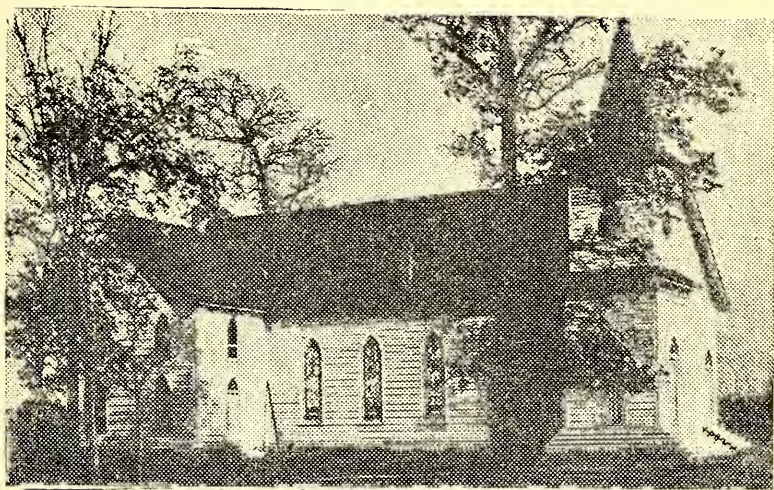
He moved from Winton in late December, 1907. During the past three years he had served Chowan Church, Winton, Oak Grove, and Union. He resigned Chowan Church when he came to Ahoskie and continued to serve the other two.

He aided the church in ordaining T. H. Overton, R. H. Overton and L. R. Dilday as deacons on the fourth Sunday night in December, 1907.

In July, 1908, the following committee was appointed to investigate repairing the church, M. A. Adams, J. B. Modlin, J. W. Greene, J. C. Jenkins, A. O. Kiff and W. P. Willoughby.

M. A. ADAMS A memorial service was held by the church for Rev. L. M. Curtis on the first Sunday in November, 1908. In August before M. A. Adams, A. O. Kiff, D. L. Myers and J. W. Harrison, were appointed a committee to confer with other churches that Brother Curtis had served and arranged for the memorial service.

The architect's plans for remodeling the building were presented to the church in February, 1909. The plans were adopted and it was decided to proceed when the money was



*Baptist Church as Remodeled During Pastorate
of Rev. M. A. Adams.*

in sight. The pastor was appointed to canvass the members.

The third Sunday morning in March, 1909, the building committee was appointed, C. C. Hoggard, J. R. Garrett, R. H. Overton, A. O. Kiff, W. P. Willoughby and W. H. Miller, In June the church voted to borrow money on the church property to make the repairs on the building, and in July, A. B. Cowan, J. R. Garrett and C. C. Hoggard were elected trustees to execute the loan. At a meeting of these trustees J. R. Garrett was elected chairman, and C. C. Hoggard, secretary.

The repairs were then made on the building at a cost of nearly \$4,000.00. The historian of the association reported in 1909:

"We are proud of Ahoskie for having outgrown her house. She is now pushing to completion a \$4,000.00 house, which will meet the needs of her growing work. With four class-rooms, an excellent auditorium, and pastor's study, it promises to be one of the best-appointed houses of worship in our association."

It is definitely recalled that Mr. Adams suggested before the church was remodeled that the church should buy a lot at the foot of Maple Street, now where the Iron Tobacco Warehouse stands, and build a new house of worship. He was the first pastor to suggest moving the church. On a visit to Ahoskie a few years ago he himself verified this statement.

In November, 1909, all the deacons resigned to take effect the first of January, 1910, and the church elected deacons by ballot. At the December conference following deacons were elected: J. P. Boyette, J. E. Lang, W. H. Miller, J. S. Mitchell, J. B. Modlin, R. S. Newsome and T. H. Overton. R. S. Newsome did not serve and T. E. Brown was elected by ballot in his place.

In June, 1910, A. O. Kiff, T. E. Brown and Hoard Newsome were appointed a committee on entertainment for the Sunday school convention to meet with Ahoskie in August. At the conference in July it was decided by the church not to allow anything sold on the church ground during the conven-

tion. This was a wise action by the church as the practice of erecting stands on church grounds to sell drinks, confectioneries, fruits, etc., had been much abused in many cases.

During this pastorate of three years 58 were baptized, church membership went from 368 to 434; the clerk was Robert Holloman; Sunday school superintendents, A. O. Kiff, W. H. Miller and W. L. Curtis; president of Missionary society, Mrs. Vara Hayes; other officers: Sunbeam leaders, Sadie Newsome Carter, Mrs. J. C. Jenkins and Mrs. F. D. Flythe; president of Young Woman's Auxiliary, Mrs. Bessie Boyette Bellamy; delegates to the association, W. H. Miller, J. E. Lang, Hoard Newsome, J. T. Parker, A. B. Cowan, C. C. Hoggard and T. E. Brown.

Mr. Adams resigned in the fall of 1910 to take effect the last of December and he went to Winterville.

C. L. Dowell, 1911-1917

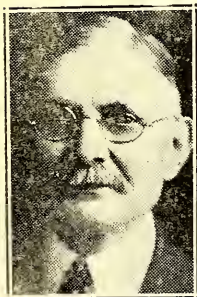
"Clarence L. Dowell was born a few miles west of Raleigh, January 3, 1861. He attended awhile the private schools near and later his parents having died he lived with his sister and attended the public school at Raleigh under Capt. John E. Dugger.

He received a scholarship in the State Normal College at Nashville, Tennessee, now Peabody College for Teachers, and entering that institution took the L. I. degree in 1882. For two years he taught in the public schools of the State, leaving a position in Durham to enter the ministry.

He became assistant to Dr. J. D. Hufham at Scotland Neck in the fall of 1884, and studied under the guidance of this capable and popular preacher and leader for more than two years. He married Miss Della Reams of Durham, October 1886, and in November entered upon his first pastorate at Williamston.

Two and one-half years later he accepted the call to Black Creek Church, Dovesville, South Carolina, and after six years of service, receiving a call to become the pastor of Welsh Neck

Church, he entered that work March, 1895. The Cheraw Church, being without a pastor, desired to divide time with the saints at Welsh Neck. For seven years he was pastor of both churches. The Welsh Neck Church has a long and honored history as the "Mother of Churches." Mrs. Dowell died during this pastorate, and two



Rev. C. L. Dowell

years later Brother Dowell moved to Henrietta, and became pastor of both Henrietta and Caroleen churches. While here he married Miss Annie Evans of Cheraw, South Carolina. Receiving a call to Bush River and Mount Zion Churches in South Carolina, he moved across the line and after nearly two years Carthage and Cameron in North Carolina offered him a field which he took. He served here about four years. He became pastor of Ahoskie and Bethlehem churches, January 1, 1911, and located in Ahoskie and remained here seven years.

In these fields, with varying degrees of success, he has labored for more than thirty years. He is a devout, consecrated pastor and preacher, and is highly esteemed in the communities where he has served."—(*Taylor's History of The Tar River Baptist Association.*)

At the first conference Mr. Dowell presided over at Ahoskie, January 21, he brought up the matter then before the West Chowan Association, that of erecting a building at the Thomasville Orphanage to be known as the "West Chowan Building." J. C. Scarborough, who with his wife were received by letters at this meeting from Murfreesboro, was asked to explain the matter. After his explanation, because of the lateness of the hour, the matter was deferred. On February 12 another conference was called and a committee of sisters was appointed to raise the \$200.00 asked of Ahoskie. Mrs. Annie Dowell, Mrs. Julia Scarborough and Mrs. Mary C. Jenkins were appointed the committee. The desired amount was raised and the building was erected at Thomasville.

It is recalled that J. D. Hufham at the association in 1885 introduced a resolution to erect such building at Thomasville but no action was taken. So 26 years later the association realized Mr. Hufham's dream.

The church still owed for much of the repairs made in 1909. In February, 1911, Robert Holloman was elected treasurer of the building fund to succeed W. H. Miller, resigned. Little more than meeting the interest as it was due was done until November, 1911, when "Brother Dowell made a strong plea for the immediate payment of the church debt, after which the church decided by a rising vote to pay the debt by January 1, 1912." On December 23, Pastor Dowell again "speaks in behalf of the church building, requesting all to

come up and pay by January 1." The debt was not paid by the first of the year and the effort was continued. In June Robert Holloman made report that \$218.00 was then due. Others appointed at different times to help Mr. Holloman with the debt were, W. T. Holloman and J. J. Askew; J. C. Jenkins, D. L. Myers and W. H. Miller; E. W. Sessoms and J. T. Parker. The debt was paid and reported to the church the second Sunday in May, 1913.

Before the old debt was all paid the church voted on February 22, 1913, to appoint a committee to confer with an architect and get up plans for finishing the church building. The committee appointed was C. C. Hoggard, J. R. Garrett, S. E. Dilday, W. H. Miller, A. T. Willoughby, D. L. Myers and J. A. Williams.

After plans had been adopted J. M. Odom, D. L. Myers and J. R. Garrett were appointed the building committee to finish the church. The baptistry was put in the church at that time and then it was never used. J. M. Odom was elected a deacon in June, 1913, to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Thomas Henry Overton. The historian of the association in his report for 1913 said of Mr. Overton: "Ahoskie has lost in the death of Thomas Henry Overton one of her most pious, useful and honored members and deacons. 'He was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost'."

In December, 1913, the pastor "presented the matter of building a church at Wake Forest College. The church agreed to assume \$50.00 for this object and Brethren R. H. Overton, John S. Mitchell, Jim Newsome and C. C. Hoggard were appointed as a committee to secure same." One month later the committee reported \$73.50 received for the Wake Forest church.

The church voted in December, 1913, upon motion of J. R. Garrett, to offer to the West Chowan Hospital Company one acre of the parsonage lot, valued at \$600.00, as a site for the hospital, but no hospital was erected.

The second Baptist Young People's Union was organized

in 1913 and the president was Miss Bettie Sessoms.

Electric lights were installed in 1915 in both the church and the pastor's home by the committee appointed, Dr. C. G. Powell, C. C. Sessoms and Mrs. D. L. Myers.

Dr. Powell, C. C. Sessoms and Robert Holloman were elected deacons in January, 1915.

For the first time the women of the church were assessed in 1916 for "pastor's salary" as the men were. Mrs. E. Hayes, Mrs. D. L. Myers and Miss Mina Holloman, with the clerk, were to make the assessments. Upon the strength of this the pastor's salary was increased \$100. Miss Holloman reported in February that the ladies of the church had been assessed for \$120 of the pastor's salary.

The West Chowan Association met with Ahoskie for the fifth time in October, 1917. In August before the meeting of the association the church appointed the following committee on hospitality, J. C. Jenkins, Robert Holloman, J. R. Garrett and W. H. Miller.

On the opening day of this annual meeting a severe storm prevented many delegates from reaching the church on time. At the evening session of the first Day Rev. T. E. Keaton preached the associational sermon. The remainder of the evening session was used in discussing food conservation. J. F. Cale was appointed to draw up suitable resolutions on the matter of saving food, which was so vital at that time. The resolutions follow:

"Whereas, there is a shortage of food stuffs caused by under-production, over consumption, devastation and waste, as a result of the World War now in progress into which our own nation has been precipitated; and whereas, it appears that food under God's will will win this war for us and our allies, and therefore President Wilson has created a Food Conservation Committee; and whereas, we wish to show our patriotism by pledging to the administration at Washington our loyalty and cooperation; therefore be it,

"Resolved: That the West Chowan Association, repre-

senting a membership of thirteen thousand in session, this the 31st day of October, 1917, by a rising vote pledge to our government its enthusiastic and patriotic support in the matter of Food Conservation."

The clerk of the association was instructed to inform Mr. H. C. Hoover, food administrator, of the above action.

Mr. Dowell resigned in August, 1917, to take effect the first of January. The historian of the association in his report said of him:

"Having found the church heavily in debt from the repairs of the year before, Brother Dowell is serving now a church free from indebtedness and one that pays as it goes." Mr. Dowell foresaw that the church would eventually have to move to a location nearer the center of the town. He told the writer that he urged upon the brethren the importance of buying the lot, where J. N. Vann's home is now, and have it ready when the time came to build again.

The following were the messengers to the association during Mr. Dowell's pastorate, W. T. Holloman, W. P. Britton, S. E. Dilday, W. H. Miller, J. B. Modlin, C. C. Hoggard, Robert Holloman, C. G. Powell, F. G. Tayloe and A. G. Bazemore; the Sunday school superintendents, W. L. Curtis, L. C. Williams, C. G. Powell; church clerks, T. E. Brown, C. C. Hoggard and F. G. Tayloe; presidents of Woman's Missionary Society, Mrs. T. E. Brown, Mrs. E. Hayes, Mrs. C. G. Powell, Mrs. A. W. Greene and Mrs. J. C. Jenkins; Sunbeam leaders, Mrs. C. C. Hoggard, Mrs. Margaret Copeland Britton and Mrs. Bettie Sessoms Copeland; Young Woman's Auxiliary, Miss Nannie Newsome, Mrs. Bettie Sessoms Copeland, Mrs. Sarah Brett Vaughan, and Mrs. C. G. Powell; Royal Ambassador leaders, Mrs. C. G. Powell, Roger Johnson and Miss Mina Holloman.

Mr. Dowell baptized 97 into the fellowship of the church. The membership in the beginning of his pastorate was 447 and at the close was 451.

Earley's Church was organized in 1917; about half of the

members, thirty-two, went from Ahoskie, and the other half from Center Grove. So Earley's is the daughter of both the mother and grandmother.

It was the practice of the church for a number of years about this time to have a treasurer for local expenses and another for missions; to assess the members for "pastor's salary," and then appoint collectors to get the money. The two who collected for the church through many years were Robert Holloman and W. H. Miller.

Mr. Dowell moved from Ahoskie to Franklinton and served the churches in Franklinton and Youngsville for seven years. From there he moved to Forestville and served this church eleven years. After this he retired from the ministry and is living in Forestville.

To show the nature of the old-time Saturday conferences the proceedings of the conference exactly forty years ago, August, is here given:

"Conference met with the church at Ahoskie, Saturday before the 4th Lord's Day in August, with prayer by Bro. R. S. Newsome. Roll was called and absentees noted. Minutes of last meeting were read and approved. Committee to see Bro..... reported, the report was received and the committee discharged. On motion Bro..... was expelled for disorderly conduct. On motion there was a committee appointed consisting of Brethren W. H. Jernigan, Robert Holloman, and R. S. Newsome to have the grounds cleared for the Association. On motion Bro. J. H. Mitchell was appointed a committee to see Bro..... and ascertain the cause of his non-attendance. On motion Bro. J. C. Jenkins is to see Bro..... and Bro. J. C. Sumner is to see Bro. and ascertain the cause of their non-attendance. On motion it was decided that the church have a called conference Saturday before the second Sunday for the purpose of calling a pastor. No other business, conference adjourned with prayer by Bro. Cross.

REV. R. D. CROSS, Moderator
T. J. VANN, Clerk."

Here are excerpts from the Minutes of the church showing some of the charges brought against members:

"On motion was expelled for disorderly conduct."

"Brother W. H. Jernigan appointed to see Bro. for drunkenness."

"Brother R. S. Newsome was appointed a committee to see Bro..... for using profanity."

"Brethren and were expelled for neglect of duty."

"On motion Bro. was excluded on charges of profanity, drunkenness and fornication."

At each regular monthly conference a collection for the poor was taken, which varied from some over a dollar to six and eight dollars; the average was near two dollars per month.

CHAPTER IV

1918-1939—A GROWING CHURCH IN A GROWING TOWN

F. T. Collins, 1918-1921

E. J. Isenhower, 1922-1924

Oscar Creech, 1925-to present, August, 1939.

F. T. Collins, 1918-1921

MR. COLLINS came to the church at an unusual time. The World War was in progress; farm prices were unreasonably advancing; automobiles were fast becoming common; transportation was on the verge of being revolutionized; in fact, the old order of things was breaking down. So this pastorate marks the end of the old order and the beginning of the new with the church. Almost everything in the nation since the war is done on a larger scale. This is true in government, education, business and in church affairs. The Ahoskie Baptist Church has been no exception.

Mr. Collins was called to preach three Sundays in the month at Ahoskie, and the other Sunday was given to Bethlehem. The salary was increased from \$550 in 1917 to \$1400 in 1918. The next year the pastor was called for full time at a salary of \$1800.

At the conference in February, 1918, two important matters were considered. Dr. C. G. Powell read the following resolutions which were adopted:

“Whereas, the present personage is not at all in keeping with our church house, nor is it a comfortable house to live in, nor is it in keeping with the other good houses of the community;

"Whereas, the present cemetery is inadequate for the future needs of our church because of its size, and on account of its location causes a rapid depreciation in value of, not only the church property, but all property adjacent thereto;

"Therefore be it resolved:

"1st, That a committee be appointed to select a suitable place for a cemetery;

"2nd, That in order to provide a more suitable and comfortable home for our pastor, a committee be appointed at this conference to consist of the three trustees and two others to be appointed by the moderator, that the duty of the committee shall be to have the old parsonage moved from its present location to a lot to be selected by them on the present parsonage property, and that the same be sold together with $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of land as may be deemed best by them; that the committee shall retain the present site not to exceed $\frac{3}{4}$ acre for the new parsonage and that the remainder of the parsonage land be sold in $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ acre lots as may be deemed best by the committee. All proceeds from the sale shall be spent in erecting the new parsonage."

D. L. Myers, D. P. Boyette and W. L. Curtis were appointed the cemetery committee. The next month W. L. Curtis asked to be taken off the committee and F. G. Tayloe was appointed. The parsonage committee were the trustees, C. C. Hoggard, J. R. Garrett and J. C. Jenkins; and C. G. Powell and W. L. Curtis were named by the moderator.

The cemetery committee, working with a similar committee from the town, selected the town's present cemetery.

The contract for building the present pastor's home was given to J. R. Garrett. The building was erected during 1919 at a cost of \$7,000.

Mr. Garrett, a contractor and a lumberman, did most all the building and repairing for the church for many years.

During the World War there was opposition to using the church building for speech making on war issues. The matter was settled on April 27, 1918, in conference when a motion was passed that "We do not close our doors to speakers on war issues."

The money-raising campaigns of the World War period worked up the religious bodies of the country to undertake such campaigns. In consequence of this, Southern Baptists at Atlanta in May, 1919, launched the seventy-five million cam-

paign. This goal was over-subscribed by fifteen millions. The goal for Ahoskie was \$16,500 and the amount actually paid during the five years was \$22,726.65, \$6,115.55 paid over the quota.

The financial depression of 1920 came and greatly changed the attitude of the people towards the seventy-five million campaign pledges. Dr. Walter N. Johnson said in the latter part of the five-year period that we had left with us the "paign" without the "cam". Even though the depression came the first year, the churches gave far more than they had ever given in a like period.

In February, 1919, the church voted to make the church-year run from October 1 to September 30 to conform with the associational year, and the annual election of officers to be held in September each year.

In March, 1920, the church donated ten feet of land on the south side of the parsonage lot for a street. That street is now Parker Avenue.

The number of deacons in the church had grown rather large as the church made each person received by letter a deacon, who was serving as a deacon in the church where he came from. In October, 1920, by consent, all deacons resigned and in November the church elected by ballot nine to serve, seven men and two women—W. H. Miller, C. G. Powell, S. E. Vaughan, J. P. Boyette, Robert Holloman, J. M. Odum, F. L. Howard, Mrs. C. C. Hoggard and Mrs. A. W. Greene.

Mr. Collins baptized 56; the membership went from 442 to 486; the Sunday school enrollment was about 335; Sunday school gifts went from \$528 to \$1,216; church gifts from \$2,307 to \$6,425.

Delegates to the association during this pastorate were W. H. Miller, J. B. Modlin, S. E. Vaughan, W. L. Curtis, C. G. Powell, C. C. Hoggard, D. P. Boyette and J. A. Williams. The clerk was F. G. Tayloe; the Sunday school superintendents, W. L. Curtis and J. A. Eley.

The officers of the Woman's Missionary Society and the

auxiliaries were as follows: Presidents of the society, Mrs. J. C. Jenkins and Mrs. Z. V. Bellamy; Young Woman's Auxiliary counselors, Miss Nannie Newsome and Mrs. Sarah Brett Vaughan; Girls' Auxiliary leader, Mrs. D. L. Myers; Sunbeam leaders, Mrs. C. C. Hoggard and Mrs. Mabel C. Hoggard Mad-dry; Royal Ambassador leader, Mrs. J. H. Jenkins.

Baptist Training Union presidents were Mrs. Thelma Boyette Middleton and F. L. Howard.

Rev. Fred T. Collins is a native of Robeson County. He graduated at Wake Forest College in 1909. He was a student of unusual ability and represented the college as an inter-collegiate debater. He was familiarly known by his student friends as "Bull" Collins.

While there he studied law but changed to the ministry near his graduation. He attended the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Ky.

Mr. Collins came from Clinton Baptist Church to Ahoskie. While here his preaching was largely attended. When he left Ahoskie, he went to Smithfield, N. C. He held other pastorates in North Carolina and South Carolina. During the past few years he has been located on a farm near Mt. Moriah in Wake County.

E. J. Isenhower, 1922-1924

Mr. Isenhower was with the Home Board evangelistic force for some years and was located at Walnut Grove, Alabama. He and his wife attended Baylor University, Texas.

His services with the church began the first of April. He was with the church through the year, 1924. He went from Ahoskie to Jonesboro and then to the Eastern Seminary in Philadelphia. His pastorates since have been in the North.

His pastorate here covered the last three years of the five year period of the seventy-five million campaign. More than \$11,000 were paid during this period to the objects of the campaign. The beautiful church piano was purchased in September, 1923.

Deacon Robert Holloman died that year. He had served

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his church long and well in many ways.

In September, 1923, the debt amounted to \$3,600 on the new pastor's home, built in 1919. The ladies paid at this conference meeting \$565 to be applied on the debt; and a campaign was launched to pay off the indebtedness.

Those representing the church as delegates to the association during this pastorate were C. G. Powell, W. L. Curtis, C. C. Hoggard, S. E. Vaughan, F. G. Tayloe, M. D. Gatling and J. T. Parker; 71 were baptized and the membership went from 484 to 574; F. G. Tayloe was clerk; J. A. Eley and C. G. Powell, the superintendents.

Officers of the Woman's Missionary Society and auxiliaries were as follows: President of society, Mrs. A. W. Greene; Y. W. A., Mrs. Thelma Boyette Middleton and Miss Mina Holloman; G. A.'s, Miss Mina Holloman and Mrs. A. M. Browne; Sunbeams, Mrs. C. C. Hoggard; Royal Ambassadors, Mrs. W. C. Mercer.

In November, 1924, the following committee was appointed to secure a pastor for next year: W. H. Miller, M. D. Gatling, S. E. Vaughan, Mrs. M. O. Gerock and Miss Bessie Tayloe. Miss Tayloe was elected secretary of the committee.

Oscar Creech, 1925-to Present, August, 1939

For twelve to fifteen years after the beginning of the town the growth was eastward from the railroad towards the church a half mile away; then the west side of the railroad began to develop. This created a rivalry between the two sections of the town. This rivalry at times reached the point of unfriendliness. This division got into the church and was so pronounced that Mr. Isenhower said that he preached to two churches in the same congregation each Sunday.

A new church house was needed for the growing church and the result of the seventy-five million campaign had shown that the church was well able to build; but the railroad partially divided the church as well as the town.

On Wednesday, December 17, 1924, the present pastor

made a visit to Ahoskie, upon the invitation of the pulpit committee, and spoke to the church that night. Without knowing anything about the division in the church he used the text, "Who shall roll us away the stone. . . " Mark 16:3. The next Sunday a call was extended and the pastor moved to Ahoskie on the 9th of January, 1925.

Be it said greatly to the credit of the church that the custom through many years has been to call a pastor before the retiring pastor had left the field, so that there was very little or no break between pastorates.

The years, 1925 through 1929, were a period of prosperity, which was reflected in the church's giving. Through these five years the gifts averaged per year for benevolent objects \$4,243, which was \$251 more than the average for local expenses, leaving out the building fund.

The first official action taken by the church in reference to the present new building was on December 9, 1925, and the motion by Dr. C. G. Powell was, "That we set next Sunday week for a called conference to ascertain the wishes of the church as to a new building; and if wanted, where?" On December 20 the conference was held. A motion was made by Dr. C. G. Powell that we build a new church building. An amendment was made by W. H. Miller that we either build or repair as seems best. The vote on the amendment was yes—48, no—89. The vote on the original motion to build a new church house carried. Dr. Powell then made another motion "that we build on the present site, yes—125, no—64." A motion was made by J. R. Garrett "that the pastor and board of deacons appoint a building committee and begin at once." The following building committee was appointed, Dr. C. G. Powell, R. R. Copeland, C. C. Hoggard, R. H. Jernigan and J. Roy Parker.

The building committee employed as architect George Van Leeuwen of Norfolk, of the firm Rudolph, Cook and Van Leeuwen. A building plan designed by the architectural department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville,

Tenn., was adopted. After Mr. Van Leeuwen had made his first sketches, Mr. E. L. Middleton, Sunday school secretary of the Baptist State Mission Board, was invited to go over the plans with the building committee for any suggestions he might offer out of his wide experience in church planning. Then other sketches of the plans were sent to the Sunday School Board at Nashville, Tenn., for further suggestions or approval. Every precaution was taken to get the building that would meet the needs. On April 4, 1926, the committee presented tentative plans and a prospectus of the proposed building. The drawing was posted for a few days in the front window of the office of the *Hertford County Herald*.

On April 25, a committee, J. Bailey Barnes, W. L. Curtis, J. C. Jenkins, R. H. Jernigan and J. Roy Parker, was appointed to canvass those of the membership, who had not already stated what they would give by the first of the year on the building. At least as much as \$10,000 was to be available before the work started. The results were so discouraging that nothing was done about beginning the work.

Then on June 25, another committee, C. G. Powell, R. H. Jernigan and F. D. Flythe, was appointed to secure an option on another site, other than the old site. The committee later reported that they thought it unwise to secure an option on another site at present. By this time the situation was becoming rather confused so on August 8, W. L. Curtis made a motion to table the whole matter and the vote was 49 for and 5 against. After eight months of voting this put the matter back where it was in the beginning and nothing more was done during 1926.

A plot of the old church lot was ordered made.

On December 9, 1925, Dr. C. G. Powell made a motion "that a committee be appointed to secure from the court a title to the church property." This motion was amended by W. L. Curtis "that the committee search the records thoroughly, and then if necessary, employ an attorney to proceed to get a clear title. Those appointed as the committee were W. L. Curtis,

J. T. Parker and C. C. Hoggard. This committee reported a month later that the deed had been secured. (The county court house was burned down by Union soldiers during the Civil War and all records were destroyed.)

On December 20, 1925, the church elected the first ushers for regular service, R. R. Copeland, J. I. Crawford, John Gatling, O. W. Hale, H. L. Harrell and R. H. Jernigan.

In January, 1927, the church began the agitation of a house of worship again and settle the question definitely in April. On January 23, upon motion by C. G. Powell, a committee, C. G. Powell, J. R. Garrett, C. C. Hoggard, S. E. Vaughan and the pastor, was appointed by ballot to study the situation as to remodeling the old building and the cost of same. After some meetings of this committee the report was made to the church, February 6, that no agreement on a plan for remodeling had been reached. Upon motion by J. M. Eley the committee was discharged. W. H. Miller then made a motion that another committee be appointed for this same purpose of remodeling and the motion was speedily tabled. So the question of remodeling was now definitely decided against for the third time.

On February 20, J. B. Modlin made a motion "that a committee be appointed to secure an option on a building site as near the center of town as possible and make a report two weeks hence."

The following brethren were appointed on the committee, C. G. Powell, C. C. Hoggard, J. R. Garrett, J. Bailey Barnes and S. E. Vaughan. On March 6, C. G. Powell, chairman, reported for the committee that two sites could be secured and that a vote be taken on the two to determine which one to put in opposition to the old site. The two lots reported were the Mitchell lot, one block west from the railroad on Church street, and the Baker lot, one block east of railroad on same street. A vote was then taken on these two lots and the Mitchell lot was selected by a vote of 85 to 47. Then a vote was taken on the old site and the Mitchell lot. The vote was

84 for old site and 116 for Mitchell lot. This was the first vote to move the church.

No vote was ever taken by the church without first giving a week's notice. Many good people on the east side of the railroad favored moving the church to the west side of town, and also many good people on the west side were in favor of the old site. Loving and patient consideration was given to both sides at all times.

Many people along with the pastor realized that the Mitchell site was not suitable for the building. It was not a corner lot and was too near the Methodist Church, that it would be an imposition upon them. After a night of serious consideration the pastor on Sunday morning, March 20, two weeks after the church had voted for the Mitchell site, asked the church not to purchase that site. He recommended that both the Mitchell lot and old site be disregarded and that a committee of ten, five from those who favored moving and five who opposed, be authorized to purchase any lot they might choose and the church abide by their decision. The church adopted the suggestion and the following committee was appointed, F. G. Tayloe, G. J. Newbern, A. M. Browne, D. P. Boyette, R. R. Copeland, R. H. Jernigan, R. H. Overton, J. Roy Parker, J. A. Williams and O. W. Hale.

The committee's first choice was the lot on which J. N. Vann's residence now stands. G. J. Newbern and the pastor were asked by the committee to go to Windsor and see the attorney who represented the owner. The committee had been informed before that the price placed on the house and lot was \$6,000. When the attorney was approached he said that he thought the place could be bought for \$6,000, but later in the week he reported a price equivalent to \$10,000. This blocked the sale.

The next selection was the Baker lot, one block nearer the railroad. The price agreed upon was \$5,000 and the sum of \$25 was paid to confirm the deal. On Sunday, April 3, Mrs. Baker returned the check to the committee and asked to be

released from the option. The committee granted her request. Then, after several meetings of the committee the next week, the report was made the following Sunday, April 10, that the committee could not agree on another lot and asked to be discharged. This was done and a motion was made immediately by J. M. Odom that on next Sunday the church vote on buying and building on J. S. Leary's lot on Main Street (the present site). J. R. Garrett offered an amendment that those in favor, vote for the Leary lot; and those opposed, vote for old site. The amendment lost and the original motion prevailed. There was probably more unkind feeling shown and expressed that day than on any other occasion in connection with moving the church. What was said that day caused the largest vote the following Sunday that was ever cast. So April 17, 1927, by a vote of 168 to 57, the church decided on the present site, at a cost of \$5,000. This brought to an end an agitation that had lasted for nearly a year and a half.

A motion was then made that a committee be appointed to purchase the lot and act as a building committee. At the evening service the pastor announced the committee, J. Bailey Barnes, A. M. Browne, R. R. Copeland, F. D. Flythe, C. C. Hoggard, Geo. J. Newbern and C. G. Powell. Dr. Powell was elected chairman. The following Sunday, April 24, the chairman reported that the Leary lot had been bought and that \$25 had been paid to confirm the sale, and that the next Sunday contributions would be taken to raise \$3,000 on the lot and that Mr. Leary would carry the \$2,000 until the fall.

On Sunday morning, May 1, about \$2,200 was raised on the lot and that afternoon \$200 was added. That night as the pastor walked on the pulpit platform a check signed by W. A. Baker was handed to him with the instruction to fill out the check for whatever amount was necessary to make the \$3,000. The first effort by the church to raise money towards the new building was gloriously successful. In October the Ladies' Aid Society gave \$2,000 to make settlement in full for the lot.

Dr. C. G. Powell served as moderator of the association from 1922 to 1927.

Deacon W. H. Miller died in the summer of this year, He gave much time to his church in many ways.

At the meeting of the association in October, 1927, the pastor of the Ahoskie Church was selected to lead the association in the Centennial movement for our colleges. The church gave him a leave of absence from the pulpit in order that he might do this work. Dr. C. G. Powell, D. L. Myers and Miss Bessie Tayloe were selected to secure supplies during his absence. Miss Bessie Tayloe was his secretary. The Farmers-Atlantic Bank gave their directors' room as an office for this campaign. Ahoskie pledged \$2,053.50 in this movement, and more than this amount was just subscribed in the Chowan College endowment campaign. Miss Bessie Tayloe was elected the treasurer of this fund for the church.

On January 8, 1928, Dr. Powell, chairman of the building committee, made the following important report:

"We, your building committee, wish to submit the following report:

"When we were appointed last spring you instructed us to purchase the Leary lot at a cost of \$5000 and proceed with the building as soon as practicable. The lot was purchased and paid for and we proceeded with the plans. We adopted the same drawings that were approved by the first building committee. The only change made was in the Sunday School building. It was made longer and narrower on account of the depth of the new lot.

"A new contract was made with Rudolph, Cooke & Van Leewen of Norfolk, Va. The old contract was 2% for plans and specifications and 2% for supervision. The new contract is 2% for plans and specifications and \$15 per trip for supervision when we think we need him. We think this a better contract than the first. The plans and specifications have been drawn and submitted to contractors. The three lowest bids we have on the building completed, except art glass and furnishings, are about \$64000. There is a difference of only \$200 to \$300 in the bids. To contract the building at these figures it would be necessary to incur a debt of \$40,000 to \$50,000 by the time the building is completed and furnished. So under the existing circumstances your committee thinks it unwise to contract the building. But after careful and thorough consideration we do recommend what may be called the "pay as you go plan." By this we mean to make the first ob-

jective to enclose the building, that is to erect the walls and put on the roof. When this is done, stop until it is paid for and then set another objective and work to that. In this way it will take longer to build but at no time will we have to incur a large debt with a big amount of interest to pay.

"Your committee further recommends that work begin just as soon as we have in sight \$12,000 to \$15,000 in cash or subscriptions to be paid when called for. When this committee was appointed, it was instructed to build as soon as practicable, but we have thought it wise to lay this whole matter before you and ask for further instructions.

"We now wait your instruction in two matters—First, Shall we build on the 'pay as you go plan' as suggested? Second, shall we begin work as soon as we have the \$12,000 to \$15,000 in sight?"

"Respectfully submitted."

The report was signed by all seven of the committee.

The church instructed the committee to proceed on the "pay as you go plan." To reach the first objective, enclosing the building, the church raised \$15,000 and borrowed \$20,000. The pay-as-you-go plan was followed all the way except paying the \$20,000 borrowed. All the rest of the work was paid for as it was done and the debt was never more.

Calvin Johnson and son of Portsmouth were secured as builders. On Tuesday, January 24, 1928, the building was laid off and H. L. Harrell began moving dirt for the foundation. All the dirt for the foundation, and ground floor was removed free of cost to the church by friends who wanted the dirt for yards, etc.

The cement foundation was poured early in March and the masons began to lay brick the week following Sunday the 11th. On Sunday afternoon, 18th, a prayer and praise service was held on the lot. *The Hertford County Herald* of March 23rd says of the meeting:

"Ahoskie Baptists dedicated to the use of future generations the spot on which their handsome new church building is under construction Sunday afternoon. Despite cold, raw, and disagreeable weather, large numbers of church members and many of other churches gathered in the street and on the church site, and others sat in their parked automobiles on Main Street to listen to the short service.

"Rev. Oscar Creech led the service which opened with prayer. Led by W. Furman Betts, evangelistic singer of Raleigh, the crowd sang hymns of praise and rejoicing, and before the benediction

was pronounced sang 'Blest Be The Tie That Binds.' Rev. W. R. Burrell, pastor of the Murfreesboro Baptist church, gave the benediction. Dr. Burrell filled his place on the program and also that of Dr. Oscar Haywood, who was unable to attend." (Dr. Haywood and Mr. Betts were aiding pastor Burrell in an evangelistic meeting at Murfreesboro and they were invited to have part in this service.)

The construction on the new building was begun two years and three months after the first move was made in December, 1925. Work continued steadily until the roof was completed in the fall. No more work was done until next April, 1929, when the concrete floor was poured. After that thousands of laths were put on by the brethren at night, giving their labor. In the fall the auditorium on the ground floor was plastered and the work went on until next May, when the first service was held in the new building.

C. M. Billings, the historian of the association, said of Ahoskie in his report in 1928: "Ahoskie is building the most commodious and expensive house of worship ever undertaken within the bounds of this association."

In 1929 the board of deacons recommended to the church that the rotating system for the deacons be adopted; which is, that the term of office be three years and no deacon be eligible for re-election under one year. This was done and the plan has worked well.

On November 11, 1929, the church passed the following important resolution:

"To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

"Be it resolved, that we, the Ahoskie Baptist Church, Ahoskie, N. C., do hereby endorse the proposed constitutional amendment prohibiting sectarian appropriations and urge its immediate passage." (House J. Res. 320.)

The delegates to the association, 1925-1929, were, W. H. Miller, W. L. Curtis, J. B. Modlin, D. P. Boyette, R. H. Overton, H. P. Gatling, J. P. Boyette, F. L. Howard, W. A. Baker, C. G. Powell, J. E. Corbitt, A. T. Willoughby, Griffin Dough-tie, J. R. Garrett, T. M. Forbes, G. W. Lassiter and Mrs. D. L.

Myers; The deacons, W. H. Miller, C. G. Powell, J. P. Boyette, S. E. Vaughan, J. M. Odom, F. L. Howard, M. D. Gatling, D. P. Boyette and O. W. Hale; deaconesses, Mrs. C. C. Hoggard, Mrs. A. W. Greene, Miss Bessie Tayloe and Mrs. C. E. Harris. The church clerks, O. W. Hale and F. G. Tayloe; Sunday school superintendent, C. G. Powell; treasurers for local expenses, C. C. Hoggard, M. D. Gatling, H. L. Harrell, J. C. Brett; treasurers for missions, D. P. Boyette, J. I. Crawford, P. W. Holloman and J. B. Gatling; Mrs. A. W. Greene served as financial secretary; treasurers of building fund, C. G. Powell and O. W. Hale.

The trustees during this same period of five years, J. B. Modlin, J. T. Parker, D. L. Myers, H. P. Gatling, P. D. Parker and Troy Newsome; D. L. Myers, Sunday School treasurer and superintendent of literature; Baptist Training Union leaders, Miss Mina Holloman, Mrs. George Burgess, Miss Eleanor Chappel, Mrs. C. D. Moore, Orville Creech, Miss Addie Mae Cooke, Miss Velve Howard and Mrs. A. Lee Copeland.

The W. M. U. leaders: Society presidents, Mrs. A. W. Greene and Miss Bessie Tayloe; Y. W. A. counselors, Mrs. C. G. Powell and Miss Florence Beasley; G. A. leaders, Mrs. Alvin Eley and Mrs. A. W. Greene; R. A. leaders, Mrs. J. S. Deans and Mrs. Hallie Baker; Sunbeam leader, Mrs. Oscar Creech.

The year 1930 brought the church to face the greatest crisis in many decades, and possibly the greatest in her history of 136 years; that of selling the old church house and lot and moving to the new building on Main Street about three-quarters of a mile west. On Sunday, April 20, 1930, the church voted to sell the old building and lot to the Presbyterians for \$6,000. The first service held in the new meeting house was on the third Sunday (18th) of May, 1930. The ground floor auditorium was completed and equipped with comfortable chairs; the Sunday school rooms were lathed but not plastered, had no doors nor windows inside but were equipped with good chairs; the building had no radiators. In October the

church voted to proceed with the plastering and the installation of radiators.

Dr. C. G. Powell gave to the church the bell that weighs 1700 pounds. It was placed in the tower before the first service in the building.

A very far-reaching move was made by the church on November 30, 1930. J. E. Corbitt made the recommendation for the budget committee that the church adopt the weekly payment plan. The recommendation was adopted that all members try to pay to the church weekly and the church pay her obligations weekly. The church made a thorough preparation for the every-member canvass, which was made in December. Weekly pledges were made to the building fund for the first time. The results of the canvass were unusually gratifying. The church was enabled to go through the awful financial depression promptly meeting her bills. Since the first Sunday in January, 1931, the pastor has been paid promptly every week, if he was in town to get his check. This is an enviable record for any church, especially having to pass through such critical times. In October, 1931, C. M. Billings, historian for the association, said of the depression:

"Prices of farm products are lower than they have been in more than thirty years; money is, therefore, harder to get and there has not been a period of such widespread depression within the memory of our oldest citizens. But God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

"The gloom of the present depression has caused a falling off in contributions from the churches to an alarming degree. An amazing indifference has seized upon our churches and as a result every cause represented in our great program is suffering."

In January, 1932, the church decided to have one treasurer for all church funds; missions, local expenses and building funds, and W. T. Forbes was elected treasurer, who served seven years. He was followed by J. E. Corbitt, who is the present treasurer.

The association met with Ahoskie for the sixth time in 1932. W. R. Stephens, pastor of Mars Hill field, preached the annual sermon, using as his text, Rev. 2:7. The weather was fine and the attendance large.

Mrs. C. C. Hoggard was president of the Elizabeth City Division of the Woman's Missionary Union for five years, 1922-1927.

Mrs. T. E. Beasley served four years as president of the Woman's Missionary Union of the association, 1931-1934.

W. L. Curtis was a trustee of Chowan College for more than fifteen years and was treasurer of their endowment fund. Dr. C. G. Powell has been a member of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention for two years.

In 1933 the stone steps were put on the front of the church building. Mrs. Hallie Baker, Mrs. A. M. Browne and Mrs. J. S. Deans were added to the building committee as the counsel and advise of ladies were desired in completing the auditorium. In October, 1934, work was begun on the main auditorium. This was completed in the summer of 1935, and was furnished that fall. The first service was held in it on the fourth Sunday in December, 1935. The pastor used as his subject that day, "God's Dining Room," John 6:35.

On Monday night, June 3, 1935, about 10:30, a fire was discovered in the hall between the main auditorium and the Sunday school department. The fire occurred where there were several paint buckets and a bale of excelsior. The cause of the fire was unknown. The damage was estimated at about \$200.

The beautiful pulpit set was given to the church by the Curtis and Dowell families for two former pastors, in memory of Rev. L. M. Curtis and in appreciation of Rev. C. L. Dowell. Seven of the nine art glass windows were presented as memorials: Rosa L. Parker Barnes, by J. Bailey Barnes and family; Mrs. India B. Gerock, by the family; Robert Holloman, Martha Holloman, wife, Paul Holloman, son; James P. Freeman and wife, Mattie J. Freeman, by Lila P. Mitchell; S. Henry

Leary, by his wife; James M. Odom, by the family; T. J. Vann, by R. A. Holloman and wife.

The large window in the front of the church was given by Dr. and Mrs. C. G. Powell and Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Odom. The Woman's Bible Class presented one "In appreciation of our pastor, Rev. Oscar Creech."

About the first of February, 1937, the last stage of the work was begun, putting in doors, windows and light fixtures in the Sunday school department. On Sunday, April 3, the announcement was made to the church that the building was completed, nine years and three months after it was begun. The lot cost \$5,000 and the building approximately \$70,000. At the time of completion the debt had been reduced from \$20,000 to \$14,500, and at present it is \$13,000.

The bronze plate on the front of the church building was given by the Girls' Auxiliary, Mrs. Claude Greene, leader.

In the beginning of the building program Psalm 127:1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it," was adopted as the central thought. It is probable that the singing of "Blest Be The Tie That Binds" at each Wednesday evening prayer service through a period of years while moving and building had more to do with developing the beautiful unity of the congregation than any other one thing that was done.

Moving the church from the old site caused a few splendid people to leave the Baptist ranks, one family united with the Episcopalians and a few more with the Presbyterians, who bought the old building from the Baptists. It is a cause for thanksgiving today that any ill-feeling over moving the church ceased to be long ago.

Just here testimony is borne to the noble service of the Ladies' Aid Society of the church. The women were untiring in their efforts for the new building. They gave and they worked. They paid \$2,000.00 on the purchase price of the lot and \$15,000, more or less, on the building. They were led in this great service by Mrs. E. Hayes, Mrs. F. D. Flythe, Mrs. G.

W. Lassiter and Mrs. T. E. Beasley.

During the building program all the ladies of the church were considered members of the Aid Society. The society as an organization existed only during the building program.

The association met again for the seventh time with Ahoskie in 1936. The church said to the association many years ago that Ahoskie was a home for the meetings if there was no invitation elsewhere. It was in this way that this session was held here. The annual sermon was preached by Lonnie Sasser, using the text, Neb. 2:17.

The Hammond organ was purchased in December, 1937, at a cost of \$1,695. Miss Madie Wade, a teacher in the school, and Mrs. Maurice Mitchell, have served as organists.

The number baptized during the present pastorate is 328; the membership has gone from 574 to about 800.

The messengers to the association from 1930 to present have been, C. C. Hoggard, C. G. Powell, Mrs. T. E. Beasley, Mrs. May P. Greene, Mrs. C. C. Hoggard, H. P. Gatling, D. L. Myers, J. T. Parker, R. J. Hoggard, J. E. Corbett, T. M. Forbes, H. U. Griffith, Mrs. M. D. Gatling, Mrs. F. D. Flythe, Mrs. R. G. Harrell, Miss Mina Holloman, Mrs. J. A. Williams, J. H. Copeland and W. L. Curtis.

Officers of the church since 1930 are as follows:

Deacons, R. J. Hoggard, Dr. W. C. Mercer, J. E. Corbett, Mrs. J. W. Johnson, Dr. C. G. Powell, T. M. Forbes, H. U. Griffith, O. W. Hale, H. P. Gatling, Mrs. C. C. Hoggard, Mrs. T. E. Beasley, Mrs. J. W. Johnson, R. A. Holloman, F. L. Howard, Mrs. W. T. Forbes, Mrs. J. M. Eley, E. C. Hill, Mrs. May P. Greene, Dewey Parker, D. P. Boyette, Troy Newsome, Roy Parker, F. D. Overton and W. C. Pritchard.

Trustees, D. L. Myers, P. D. Parker, Troy Newsome and P. M. Joyner.

Clerks, D. P. Boyette and L. K. Powell.

Treasurers, Local Expenses, J. C. Brett, W. T. Forbes and J. E. Corbett; Missions, J. B. Gatling; Building Fund, Alvah Early. Financial secretaries, Mrs. May P. Greene and

Mrs. S. F. Bowers; Sunday school superintendents, C. G. Powell, H. O. Boulter and E. C. Hill.

Training Union directors, J. B. Gatling, Hersey Evans, Craig Vaughan, Mrs. Virginia Parker Gray, Lloyd Godwin, Raleigh White and Walton Harrell.

W. M. S. and Auxiliaries: Presidents, Mrs. May P. Greene, Mrs. C. C. Hoggard, Mrs. Ernestine Hayes Miller.

Y. W. A. counselor, Miss Florence Beasley.

G. A. leaders, Mrs. Hallie Baker, Mrs. C. C. Sessoms, Mrs. Z. V. Bellamy, Mrs. Claud Greene, Mrs. C. N. Ricks, Mrs. N. S. Godwin and Mrs. Craig Vaughan.

R. A. leader, Mrs. Oscar Creech.

Sunbeam leaders, Mrs. Oscar Creech, Mrs. R. L. Callis, Mrs. Maurice Mitchell, Mrs. D. L. Myers and Mrs. George Burgess.

The church has a worthy record. Many noble men and noble women have contributed to make this splendid history. The glorious past should be a pillar of light as the church faces the future. For the most part it can be said that the church has been nobly loyal to her pastors, liberal in support of the Baptist institutions, and the missionary spirit and support have abounded. Let it be said in the spirit of Christ that the Ahoskie Baptist Church deeply appreciates the town that has grown up around her door and while she is eighty-five years older than the town, she is still youthful in spirit, and ready for the word, "Go", as the second half of the first century of the town is begun.

In conclusion, appreciation is hereby expressed to Mrs. Bettie Mitchell, who in 1933 gave some important information on the history of the church; to Dr. G. W. Paschal of Wake Forest, and Rev. E. C. Kolb of Wingate for suggestions and help; to all friends and members of the church who have aided in any way in the writing of this history; and to J. Roy Parker and *The Hertford County Herald* for making it possible to have the history published.

The records of the church up to 1899 have been lost. For

ninety-five years the principal source of information was the Minutes of the Chowan Association, found only in the Wake Forest College library, and the Minutes of the West Chowan Association. Even the church records are not complete in many cases. This makes the historian's task more difficult.

The names of many people who served the church well and for many years, and deserve to be mentioned, do not occur in the records and, therefore, are not in this history. The names of neither deacons nor Sunday school teachers occur in the minutes of the association. But there is a heavenly record that has the names of all the faithful. The hope of the writer is that this may be as helpful and inspiring to those who read it as the search for the story has been to him.

The End.

ROLL OF MEMBERS—1940

AHOSKIE BAPTIST CHURCH

Acree, Mrs. G. W.	Barnes, Bill
Adkins, Mrs. V. L.	Bazemore, Ethel
Adkins, William	Bazemore, Marion
Ainsley, Mrs. Ira	Beal, Mrs. Ida L.
Alexander, Leo	Beasley, Mrs. T. E.
Alexander, J. S.	Beasley, Mrs. Florence
Alexander, Mrs. J. S.	Bell, Mrs. E. J.
Alexander, John	Bell, E. J. Jr.
Alexander, Linwood	Bell, Bernard
Alexander, Vernelle	Bell, J. H.
Alford, B. G.	Bell, Francis
Askew, G. G.	Bell, Mrs. J. A.
Askew, Mrs. G. G.	Bell, E. L.
Askew, James	Belch, Jessie Lee
Askew, Mrs. Hubert	Bellamy, Z. V.
Askew, Charlotte	Bellamy, Mrs. Z. V.
Askew, Mrs. C. W.	Benthall, William
Askew, Jane	Benthall, Mrs. William
Askew, Janice	Benthall, A. R.
Askew, O'Quinn	Benthall, Mrs. A. R.
Askew, Mrs. Bettie	Benthall, J. C.
Askew, Jennings	Benton, Ernest
Askew, Edna	Beverly, Margaret
Askew, Mrs. Bessie N.	Bishop, Mrs. Louise G.
Askew, Carlyle	Blythe, Jodie
Ausley, David	Boulter, H. O.
Ausley, Mrs. David	Boulter, Mrs. H. O.
Ausley, J. D.	Boulter, Harry
Ausley, Adele	Bowers, Sidney
Ausley, Rachel	Bowen, Alvin R.
Ausley, Myrtle	Bowen, Mrs. Alvin R.
Ausley, Mary	Bowen, Christine
Ausley, Virginia	Bowles, Edward
Baker, Mrs. Hallie O.	Boyette, D. P.
Baker, W. A.	Boyette, Dan P. Jr.
Baker, Mrs. W. A.	Boyette, Mrs. Annie B.
Baker, Margie	Boyette, Lillian
Baker, Billy	Bozeman, Mrs. Gertie
Baker, Milton	Bozeman, Rachel
Baker, Eugene	Bozeman, Mrs. Vera M.
Baker, M. S.	Brett, J. C.
Baker, Mrs. M. S.	Brett, Mrs. J. C.
Baker, Maylon, Jr.	Brett, Virginia L.
Baker, Carrington	Brantley, Mrs. Eunice
Baker, Mrs. Bettie L.	Bridgers, Mrs. Lois G.
Barnes, Carrie	Brinkley, Addie
Barnes, J. B.	Brinkley, Mrs. J. R.
Barnes, Mrs. J. B.	Brinkley, Basil
Barnes, J. Bailey, Jr.	Brinkley, Mrs. Basil
Barnes, Jack	Britton, O. H.

Britton, Mrs. O. H.	Carter, W. N.
Britton, Lloyd	Carter, William
Britton, Mrs. Lloyd	Casper, Mrs. P. J.
Britton, Clarence	Casper, Augustine
Britton, Mary Frances	Charlton, Harriett
Britton, Mrs. E. W.	Charlton, Lillian
Britton, Leora	Charlton, Mrs. Lillian
Britton, Thelma	Clendennon, Mrs. Fox
Britton, Mrs. Eula	Cherry, Mrs. J. Carlton
Britton, Johnnie	Cobb, B. C.
Britton, Mrs. Johnnie	Coggins, Mrs. C. B.
Britton, Mrs. Cora S.	Coleson, Mrs. I. C.
Britton, B. W.	Coleson, Bertha
Browne, A. M.	Coley, Mrs. Mamie
Browne, Mrs. A. M.	Coley, Mamie
Browne, Mrs. Burnie	Coley, Charlie
Browne, Mrs. P. W.	Coley, Carrie
Browne, Llewellyn	Copeland, B. E.
Browne, Mildred	Copeland, Mrs. B. E.
Browne, Irene	Copeland, Harry
Brown, R. L., Jr.	Copeland, Mrs. Harry
Brewer, W. P.	Copeland, R. R.
Brewer, Mrs. Railey	Copeland, Mrs. R. R.
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Carter, Elma Mae	Cowan, Mrs. Vesuvius

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Earley, Mrs. Otis

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Harrell, Ellis Dey	Holloman, Mrs. R. A., Jr.
Harrell, Jewel	Holloman, Mrs. D. L.
Harrell, Bernard	Holloman, Blanche
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Harrell, W. H.	Holloman, Henry
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Howard, Elizabeth	Leary, Cedric
Howard, Velva	Lee, Olin
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Hyatt, Shirley	Liverman, Eddie
Hyatt, Mrs. Henry	Liverman, Mrs. Eddie
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Inscoe, Mrs. Floyd	Liverman, Ovie
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Jenkins, Cecil	Liverman, H. F.
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Jenkins, Cecil H.	Liverman, Paul
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Jenkins, Viola	Liverman, L. T., Sr.
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Jernigan, Lee	Liverman, M. G.
Jernigan, Mrs. Lee	Liverman, Mrs. M. G.
Jernigan, Lee S., Jr.	Liverman, Beulah
Jernigan, Troy	Liverman, William
Jernigan, Mrs. Troy	Liverman, Zelma S.
Jernigan, Lalla	Liverman, Lewis
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Jordan, Thos. P.	Lowe, Mildred
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King, Jimmie	Miller, Mrs. Dan
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Modlin, Hilton	O'Briant, Mrs. E. C.
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Overton, Joe	Pierce, Lloyd
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Overton, Lu Lu	Powell, Mrs. J. B.
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Overton, Sherman	Powell, Mrs. Darden
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Overton, Mrs. Lucy	Powell, Saphroni
Overton, Mrs. Annie	Powell, Bruce
Overton, Mrs. Levy	Powell, Mrs. Bruce
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Owen, Mrs. Taft	Powell, Mrs. Mary
Parker, J. Roy	Powell, Willie
Parker, Mrs. J. Roy	Powell, Frank
Parker, Roy, Jr.	Powell, Mrs. Helen
Parker, Mrs. Walter	Powell, D. C.
Parker, P. D.	Powell, Ethel
Parker, Mrs. P. D.	Powell, Lona
Parker, Mayon	Powell, Roy
Parker, Mrs. Mayon	Powell, Earl
Parker, Joe	Powell, Mrs. Earl
Parker, D. C.	Pritchard, W. C.
Parker, Thomas	Pritchard, Mrs. W. C.
Parker, Mrs. Thomas	Pritchard, Jane
Parker, Mrs. Otis	Proctor, John
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Parker, Julian	Rodwell, Mrs. David
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Pearce, Jesse D.	Roberts, Muriel
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Perry, Mrs. Glennie	Sessoms, James
Pierce, Mrs. Ann	Sessoms, Mrs. Annie
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Sessoms, C. C.	Vaughan, Gilbert
Sessoms, Mrs. C. C.	Vaughan, Nurney
Sessoms, Eckie	Vinson, Ruth O.
Shelton, Junior	Vinson, J. Stanley
Shelton, Margaret	Vinson, Mrs. J. Stanley
Slaughter, Mrs. Hazel S.	Vinson, Mrs. James S.
Slaughter, Bernice	Vinson, Sam
Slaughter, Edith	Vinson, Anne Eley
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Sumner, Bettie J.	Whedbee, John
Sumner, Mrs. Fannie	Whedbee, Mrs. John
Sumner, Robert	Whedbee, Clarence
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Taylor, Julian B.	White, James
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Taylor, Frances	White, Mrs. Johnnie L.
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Thorne, Mrs. E. L.	Whitehurst, R. C., Jr.
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Thomas, D. L.	Williams, Mrs. Ben M.
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